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THE HISTORY OF NOURJAHAD

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OF

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Harriet THE Temayne

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SChemzeddin was in his two and twentieth year when he mounted the throne of Perſia. His great wiſdom and extraordinary endowments rendered him the delight of his people, and filled them with expectations of a glorious and happy reign. Amongſt the number of perſons who ſtood candidates for the young ſultan's favour, in the new adminiſtration, which was now going to take place, none ſeemed ſo likely to ſucceed,

as Nourjahad the ſon of Namarand. This young man was about the age of Schemzeddin, and had been bred up with him from his infancy. To a very engaging perſon was added a ſweetneſs of temper, a livelineſs of fancy, and a certain agreeable manner of addreſs, that engaged every one's affections who approached him. The ſultan loved him, and every one looked on Nourjahad as the riſing ſtar of the Perſian court, whom his maſter's partial fondneſs would elevate to the higheſt pinnacle of honour. Schemzeddin indeed was deſirous of promoting his favourite, yet notwithſtanding his attachment to him, he was not blind to his faults; but they appeared to him only ſuch as are almoſt inſeparable from youth and inexperience; and he made no doubt but that Nourjahad, when time

time had a little more ſubdued his youthful paſſions, and matured his judgment, would be able to fill the place of his firſt miniſter, with abilities equal to any of his predeceſſors. He would not, however, even in his own private thoughts, reſolve on ſo important a ſtep, without firſt conſulting with ſome old lords of his court, who had been the conſtant friends and counſellors of the late ſultan his father. Accordingly having called them into his cloſet one day, he propoſed the matter to them, and deſired their opinion. But before they delivered it, he could eaſily diſcover by the countenances of theſe grave and prudent men, that they diſapproved his choice. What have you to object to Nourjahad, ſaid the ſultan, finding that they all continued ſilent, looking at each other? His youth, replied the eldeſt of

the counſellors. That objection, anſwered Schemzeddin, will grow lighter every day. His avarice, cried the ſecond. Thou art not juſt, ſaid the ſultan, in charging him with that; he has no ſupport but from my bounty, nor did he ever yet take advantage of that intereſt which he knows he has in me, to deſire an encreaſe of it. What I have charged him with, is in his nature notwithſtanding, replied the old lord. What haſt thou to urge, cried the ſultan, to his third adviſer? His love of pleaſure, anſwered he. That, cried Schemzeddin, is as groundleſs an accuſation as the other; I have known him from his childhood, and think few men of his years are ſo temperate. Yet would he indulge to exceſs, if it were in his power, replied the old man. The ſultan now addreſſed the fourth: What

fault

fault haſt thou to object to him, cried he? His irreligion, anſwered the ſage. Thou art even more ſevere, replied the ſultan, than the reſt of thy brethren, and I believe Nourjahad as good a Muſſulman as thyſelf. He diſmiſſed them coldly from his cloſet; and the four counſellors ſaw how impolitic a thing it was to oppoſe the will of their ſovereign.

Though Schemzeddin ſeemed diſpleaſed with the remonſtrances of the old men, they nevertheleſs had ſome weight with him. It is the intereſt of Nourjahad, ſaid he, to conceal his faults from me; the age and experience of theſe men doubtleſs has furniſhed them with more ſagacity than my youth can boaſt of; and he may be in reality what they have repreſented him. This

thought diſquieted the ſultan, for he loved Nourjahad as his brother. Yet who knows, cried he, but it may be envy in theſe old men? they may be provoked at having a youth raiſed to that honour to which each of them perhaps in his own heart aſpires. We can ſometimes form a better judgment of a man's real diſpoſition, from an unguarded ſally of his own lips, than from a cloſe obſervation of years, where the perſon, conſcious of being obſerved, is watchful and cautious of every look and expreſſion that falls from him. I will ſound Nourjahad when he leaſt ſuſpects that I have any ſuch deſign, and from his own mouth will I judge him.

It was not long before the ſultan had an opportunity of executing his purpoſe. Having paſt the evening with his favourite

vourite at a banquet, where they had both indulged pretty freely, he invited Nourjahad to a walk by moon-light in the gardens of the ſeraglio. Schemzeddin leaned on his ſhoulder as they rambled from one delicious ſcene to another; ſcenes rendered ſtill more enchanting by the ſilence of the night, the mild luſtre of the moon now at full, and the exhalations which aroſe from a thouſand odoriferous ſhrubs. The ſpirits of Nourjahad were exhilerated by the mirth and feſtivity in which he had paſſed the day. The ſultan's favour intoxicated him; his thoughts were diſſipated by a variety of agreeable ſenſations, and his whole ſoul as it were rapt in a kind of pleaſing delirium. Such was the frame of Nourjahad's mind, when the ſultan, with an aſſumed levity, throwing himſelf down on a bank of violets, and familiarly

drawing his favourite to ſit by him, ſaid, *Tell me, Nourjahad, and tell me truly, what would ſatisfy thy wiſhes, if thou wert certain of poſſeſſing whatſoever thou ſhouldſt deſire?* Nourjahad remaining ſilent for ſome time, the ſultan, ſmiling, repeated his queſtion. My wiſhes, anſwered the favourite, are ſo boundleſs, that it is impoſſible for me to tell you directly; but in two words, I ſhould deſire to be poſſeſſed of inexhauſtible riches, and to enable me to enjoy them to the utmoſt, to have my life prolonged to eternity. Wouldſt thou then, ſaid Schemzeddin, forego thy hopes of paradiſe? I would, anſwered the favourite, make a paradiſe of this earthly globe whilſt it laſted, and take my chance for the other afterwards.

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The ſultan, at hearing theſe words, ſtarted up from his ſeat, and knitting his brow, Be gone, ſaid he, ſternly, thou art no longer worthy of my love or my confidence: I thought to have promoted thee to the higheſt honours, but ſuch a wretch does not deſerve to live. Ambition, though a vice, is yet the vice of great minds; but avarice, and an inſatiable thirſt for pleaſure, degrades a man below the brutes.

Saying this, he turned his back on Nourjahad, and was about to leave him; when the favourite catching him by the robe, and falling on his knees, Let not my lord's indignation, ſaid he, be kindled againſt his ſlave, for a few light words, which fell from him only in ſport: I ſwear to thee, my prince, by our holy prophet, that what I ſaid is far

from being the ſentiments of my heart; my deſire for wealth extends not farther than to be enabled to procure the ſober enjoyments of life; and for length of years, let not mine be prolonged a day, beyond that, in which I can be ſerviceable to my prince and my country.

It is not, replied the ſultan, with a mildneſs chaſtened with gravity, it is not for mortal eyes to penetrate into the cloſe receſſes of the human heart; thou haſt atteſted thy innocence by an oath; it is all that can be required from man to man; but remember thou haſt called our great prophet to witneſs; him thou canſt not deceive, though me thou mayeſt.

Schemzeddin left him without waiting for his reply; and Nourjahad, exceedingly

ceedingly mortified that his unguarded declaration had ſo much leſſened him in his maſter's eſteem, retired to his own houſe, which immediately joined the ſultan's palace.

He paſſed the reſt of the night in traverſing his chamber, being unable to take any reſt. He dreaded the thoughts of loſing the ſultan's favour, on which alone he depended for his future advancement; and tormenting himſelf all night with apprehenſions of his diſgrace, he found himſelf ſo indiſpoſed in the morning, that he was unable to leave his chamber. He ſpent the day in gloomy reflections without ſuffering any one to come near him, or taking any repaſt: and when night came, wearied with painful thoughts, and want of ſleep, he threw himſelf on his bed. But his

ſlumbers were diſturbed by perplexing dreams. What had been the ſubject of his anxiety when awake, ſerved now to imbitter and diſtract his reſt: his fancy repreſented the ſultan to him as he had laſt ſeen him in the garden, his looks ſevere, and his words menacing. 'Go, wretch, he thought he heard him cry, go ſeek thy bread in a remote country, thou haſt nothing to expect from me but contempt.'

Nourjahad awoke in agonies: Oh heaven, cried he aloud, that I could now inherit the ſecret wiſh I was fool enough to diſcloſe to thee, how little ſhould I regard thy threats! And thou ſhalt, Oh Nourjahad, replied a voice, poſſeſs the utmoſt wiſhes of thy ſoul! Nourjahad ſtarted up in his bed, and rubbed his eyes, doubting whether he

was

was really awake, or whether it was not his troubled imagination which cheated him with this deluſive promiſe; when behold! to his unutterable aſtoniſhment, he ſaw a refulgent light in his chamber, and at his bed's ſide ſtood a youth of more than mortal beauty. The luſtre of his white robes dazzled his eyes; his long and ſhining hair was incircled with a wreath of flowers that breathed the odours of paradiſe.

Nourjahad gazed at him, but had not power to open his mouth. Be not afraid, ſaid the divine youth, with a voice of ineffable ſweetneſs; I am thy guardian genius, who have carefully watched over thee from thy infancy, though never till this hour have I been permitted to make myſelf viſible to thee. I was preſent at thy converſation in the garden

with

with Schemzeddin, I was a witneſs to thy unguarded declaration, but found thee afterwards awed by his frowns to retract what thou hadſt ſaid: I ſaw too the rigour of the ſultan's looks as he departed from thee, and know that they proceeded from his doubting thy truth. I, though an immortal ſpirit, am not omniſcient; to God only are the ſecrets of the heart revealed; ſpeak boldly then, thou highly favoured of our prophet, and know that I have power from Mahomet to grant thy requeſt, be it what it will. Wouldſt thou be reſtored to the favour and confidence of thy maſter, and receive from his friendſhip and generoſity the reward of thy long attachment to him, or doſt thou really deſire the accompliſhment of that extravagant wiſh, which thou didſt in

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the openneſs of thy heart avow to him laſt night?

Nourjahad, a little recovered from his amazement, and encouraged by the condeſcenſion of his celeſtial viſitant, bowed his head low in token of adoration.

Diſguiſe to thee, Oh ſon of paradiſe, replied he, were vain and fruitleſs; if I diſſembled to Schemzeddin it was in order to reinſtate myſelf in his good opinion, the only means in my power to ſecure my future proſpects: from thee I can have no reaſon to conceal my thoughts; and ſince the care of my happineſs is conſigned to thee my guardian angel; let me poſſeſs that wiſh, extravagant as it may ſeem, which I firſt declared.

Raſh

Raſh mortal, replied the ſhining viſion, reflect once more, before you receive the fatal boon; for once granted, you will wiſh perhaps, and wiſh in vain, to have it recalled. What have I to fear, anſwered Nourjahad, poſſeſſed of endleſs riches and of immortality? Your own paſſions, ſaid the heavenly youth. I will ſubmit to all the evils ariſing from them, replied Nourjahad, give me but the power of gratifying them in their full extent. Take thy wiſh then, cried the genius, with a look of diſcontent. The contents of this viol will confer immortality on thee, and to-morrow's ſun ſhall behold thee richer than all the kings of the Eaſt. Nourjahad ſtretched his hands out eagerly to receive a veſſel of gold, enriched with precious ſtones, which the angel took from under his mantle. Stop, cried the aerial being,

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and hear the condition, with which thou muſt accept the wondrous gift I am now about to beſtow. Know then, that your exiſtence here ſhall equal the date of this ſublunary globe; yet to enjoy life all that while, is not in my power to grant. Nourjahad was going to interrupt the celeſtial, to deſire him to explain this, when he prevented him, by proceeding thus: Your life, ſaid he, will be frequently interrupted by the temporary death of ſleep. Doubtleſs, replied Nourjahad, nature would languiſh without that ſovereign balm. Thou miſunderſtandeſt me, cried the genius; I do not mean that ordinary repoſe which nature requires: The ſleep thou muſt be ſubject to, at certain periods, will laſt for months, years, nay, for a whole revolution of Saturn at a time, or perhaps for a century. Frightful! cried

Nourjahad,

Nourjahad, with an emotion that made him forget the reſpect which was due to the preſence of his guardian angel. He ſeemed ſuſpended, while the radiant youth proceeded; It is worth conſidering, reſolve not too haſtily. If the frame of man, replied Nourjahad, in the uſual courſe of things, requires for the ſupport of that ſhort ſpan of life which is allotted to him, a conſtant and regular portion of ſleep, which includes at leaſt one third of his exiſtence; my life, perhaps, ſtretched ſo much beyond its natural date, may require a ſtill greater proportion of reſt, to preſerve my body in due health and vigour. If this be the caſe, I ſubmit to the conditions; for what is thirty or fifty years out of eternity? Thou art miſtaken, replied the genius; and though thy reaſoning is not unphiloſophical, yet is it far from reaching the

true

true cauſe of theſe myſterious conditions which are offered thee; know that theſe are contingencies which depend entirely on thyſelf. Let me beſeech you, ſaid Nourjahad, to explain this. If thou walkeſt, ſaid the genius, in the paths of virtue, thy days will be crowned with gladneſs, and the even tenor of thy life undiſturbed by any evil; but if, on the contrary, thou perverteſt the good which is in thy power, and ſetteſt thy heart on iniquity, thou wilt thus be occaſionally puniſhed by a total privation of thy faculties. If this be all, cried Nourjahad, then am I ſure I ſhall never incur the penalty; for though I mean to enjoy all the pleaſures that life can beſtow, yet am I a ſtranger to my own heart, if it ever lead me to the wilful commiſſion of a crime. The genius ſighed. Vouchſafe then, proceeded Nourjahad, vouchſafe, I

conjure

conjure you, moſt adorable and benign ſpirit, to fulfil your promiſe, and keep me not longer in ſuſpence. Saying this, he again reached forth his hand for the golden veſſel, which the genius no longer with-held from him. Hold thy noſtrils over that viol, ſaid he, and let the fumes of the liquor which it contains aſcend to thy brain. Nourjahad opened the veſſel, out of which a vapour iſſued of a moſt exquiſite fragrance; it formed a thick atmoſphere about his head, and ſent out ſuch volatile and ſharp effluvia, as made his eyes ſmart exceedingly, and he was obliged to ſhut them whilſt he ſnuffed up the eſſence. He remained not long in this ſituation, for the ſubtle ſpirit quickly evaporating, the effects inſtantly ceaſed, and he opened his eyes; but the apparition was vaniſhed, and his apartment in total dark-

neſs. Had not he ſtill found the viol in his hands, which contained the precious liquor, he would have looked on all this as a dream; but ſo ſubſtantial a proof of the reality of what had happened, leaving no room for doubts, he returned thanks to his guardian genius, whom he concluded, though inviſible, to be ſtill within hearing, and putting the golden veſſel under his pillow, filled as he was with the moſt delightful ideas, compoſed himſelf to ſleep.

The ſun was at his meridian height when he awoke next day; and the viſion of the preceding night immediately recurring to his memory, he ſprung haſtily from his bed; but how great was his ſurprize, how high his tranſports, at ſeeing the accompliſhment of the genius's promiſe! His chamber was ſurrounded with

with ſeveral large urns of poliſhed braſs, ſome of which were filled with gold coin of different value and impreſſions; others with ingots of fine gold; and others with precious ſtones of prodigious ſize and luſtre.

Amazed, enraptured at the ſight, he greedily examined his treaſures, and looking into each of the urns one after the other, in one of them he found a ſcroll of paper, with theſe words written on it.

'I have fulfilled my promiſe to thee, 'Oh Nourjahad. Thy days are without 'number, thy riches inexhauſtible, yet 'cannot I exempt thee from the evils 'to which all the ſons of Adam are ſub-'ject. I cannot ſcreen thee from the 'machinations of envy, nor the rapaci-

'ouſneſs

'ouſneſs of power: thy own prudence
'muſt henceforth be thy guard. There
'is a ſubterraneous cave in thy garden
'where thou mayſt conceal thy treaſure:
'I have marked the place, and thou
'wilt eaſily find it. Farewel, my charge
'is at an end.'

And well haſt thou acquitted thyſelf of this charge, moſt munificent and benevolent genius, cried Nourjahad; ten thouſand thanks to thee for this laſt friendly warning; I ſhould be a fool indeed if I had not ſagacity enough to preſerve myſelf againſt rapaciouſneſs or envy; I will prevent the effects of the firſt, by concealing thee, my precious treaſure, thou ſource of all felicity, where no mortal ſhall diſcover thee; and for the other, my bounty ſhall diſarm it of its ſting. Enjoy thyſelf, Nourjahad,

riot in luxurious delights, and laugh at Schemzeddin's impotent reſentment.

He haſtened down into his garden, in order to find the cave, of which he was not long in ſearch. In a remote corner, ſtood the ruins of a ſmall temple, which in former days, before the true religion prevailed in Perſia, had been dedicated to the worſhip of the Gentiles. The veſtiges of this little building were ſo curious, that they were ſuffered to remain, as an ornament, where they ſtood. It was raiſed on a mount, and according to the cuſtom of idolaters, ſurrounded with ſhady trees. On a branch of one of theſe, Nourjahad perceived hanging a ſcarf of fine white taffety, to which was ſuſpended a large key of burniſhed ſteel.

Nourja-

Nourjahad's eager curioſity, ſoon rendered his diligence ſucceſsful, in finding the door, to which this belonged; it was within-ſide the walls of the temple, and under what formerly ſeemed to have been the altar. He deſcended by a few ſteps into a pretty ſpacious cavern, and by groping about, for there was ſcarce any light, he judged it large enough to contain his treaſures.

Whether his guardian genius had contrived it purely for his uſe, or whether it had been originally made for ſome other purpoſe, he did not trouble himſelf to enquire; but glad to have found ſo ſafe a place, in which to depoſite his wealth, he returned to his houſe;

and having given orders that no viſitors ſhould approach him, he ſhut himſelf up in his chamber for the reſt of the day, in order to contemplate his own happineſs, and without interruption, to lay down plans of various pleaſures and delights for ages to come.

Whilſt Nourjahad was rich only in ſpeculation, he really thought that he ſhould be able to keep his word with the genius. That the employing his wealth to noble and generous purpoſes, would have conſtituted great part of his happineſs; and that without plunging into guilt, he could have gratified the utmoſt of his wiſhes. But he ſoon found that his heart had deceived him, and that there is a wide difference be-

tween

tween the fancied and actual poſſeſſion of wealth. He was immediately abſorbed in ſelfiſhneſs, and thought of nothing but the indulgence of his own appetites. My temper, ſaid he, as he lay ſtretched at length on a ſopha, does not much incline me to take any trouble; I ſhall therefore never aſpire at high employments, nor would I be the ſultan of Perſia, if I might; for what addition would that make to my happineſs? None at all; it would only diſturb my breaſt with cares, from which I am now exempt. And which of the real, ſubſtantial delights of life, could I then poſſeſs, that are not now within my power? I will have a magnificent houſe in town, and others in the country, with delicious parks and gardens. What does it ſig-

nify whether or not they are dignified with the names of palaces? or whether I am attended by princes or ſlaves? The latter will do my buſineſs as well, and be more ſubſervient to my will. There are three particulars indeed, in which I will exceed my maſter. In the beauties of my ſeraglio; the delicacies of my table; and the excellence of my muſicians. In the former of theſe eſpecially, King Solomon himſelf ſhall be outdone. All parts of the earth ſhall be explored for women of the moſt exquiſite beauty; art and nature ſhall combine their utmoſt efforts, to furniſh the boundleſs variety and elegance of my repaſts; the ſultan's frigid temperance ſhall not be a pattern to me. Then no fear of ſurfeits; I may riot to exceſs, and bid defiance to death.

Here

Here he ſtarted, on recollection that he had not requeſted the genius to ſecure him againſt the attacks of pain or ſickneſs. I ſhall not however be impaired by age, ſaid he, and this too perhaps is included in his gift. But no matter; ſince I cannot die, a little temporary pain will make me the more reliſh my returning health. Then, added he, I will enjoy the charms of muſic in its utmoſt perfection. I will have the univerſe ſearched for performers of both ſexes, whoſe exquiſite ſkill both in inſtrumental and vocal harmony, ſhall raviſh all hearts. I ſhall ſee the line of my poſterity paſt numeration, and all the while enjoy a conſtant ſucceſſion of new delights. What more is there wanting to conſummate happineſs, and

who would ever wiſh to change ſuch an exiſtence, for one of which we are entirely ignorant? Here he pauſed. But are there not, he proceeded, ſome things called intellectual pleaſures? Such as Schemzeddin uſed to talk of to me, and for which, when I was poor, I fancied I had a ſort of reliſh. They may have their charms, and we will not leave them quite out of our plan. I will certainly do abundance of good; beſides, I will retain in my family half a ſcore of wiſe and learned men, to entertain my leiſure hours with their diſcourſe. Then when I am weary of living in this country, I will ſet out with ſome choſen companions to make a tour through the whole earth. There ſhall not be a ſpot of the habitable world, which contains

any

any thing worthy of my curioſity, that I will not viſit; reſiding longeſt in thoſe places which I like beſt: and by this means I may paſs through two or three centuries, even before I have exhauſted the variety of my proſpects: after that I muſt content myſelf with ſuch local enjoyments, as may fall in my way.

With ſuch thoughts as theſe he entertained himſelf, waiting for the hour when his ſlaves ſhould be retired to reſt, as he had reſolved to take that opportunity of burying his treaſure.

He had tried the weight of the urns one by one; thoſe which contained the gold he found ſo extreamly heavy that it was impoſſible for him to lift them.

Thoſe which held the jewels, he could eaſily carry. Accordingly, when every one in his houſe was aſleep, he loaded himſelf with his pleaſing burdens; and having from each of the repoſitories which held the gold, filled ſeveral large purſes for his immediate expences, he conveyed the reſt by many journeys to and from the cave, all ſafe to his ſubterranean treaſury; where having locked them up ſecurely, he retired to his apartment, and went to bed.

For the three ſucceeding days his thoughts were ſo perplexed and divided, that he knew not which of his favourite ſchemes he ſhould firſt enter upon. Satisfied with having the means in his power, he neglected thoſe ends for which he

he was ſo deſirous of them. Shall I, ſaid he, purchaſe or ſet about building for myſelf a magnificent palace? Shall I diſpatch emiſſaries in ſearch of the moſt beautiful virgins that can be obtained? and others, at the ſame time, to procure for me the rareſt muſicians? My houſehold, meanwhile, may be eſtabliſhed, and put on a footing ſuitable to the grandeur in which I purpoſe to live. I will directly hire a number of domeſtics, amongſt which ſhall be a dozen of the beſt cooks in Perſia, that my table at leaſt may be immediately better ſupplied than that of the ſultan. I am bewildered with ſuch a multiplicity of buſineſs, and muſt find out ſome perſon, who, without giving me any trouble, will undertake to regulate the œconomy of all my domeſtic concerns.

In theſe thoughts he was ſo immerſed, that he entirely forgot to pay his court to Schemzeddin; and without any other enjoyment of his riches, than the pleaſure of thinking of them, he ſat for whole days alone, alternately improving on, or rejecting, ſuch ſyſtems of happineſs as aroſe in his mind.

The ſultan, mean time, offended at his abſenting himſelf, without offering any excuſe for it, eſpecially as their laſt parting had been a cold one; was ſo diſguſted at his behaviour, that he ſent one of his officers to forbid him his preſence, and charge him never more to appear at court. Tell him, however, ſaid he, that I have not ſo far for-

got

got my former friendſhip for him, as to ſee him want a decent ſupport; that houſe, therefore, in which he now lives, I freely beſtow on him; and ſhall moreover allow him a penſion of a thouſand crowns yearly. Bid him remember that this is ſufficient to ſupply him with all the ſober enjoyments of life. Theſe being his favourite's own words, the ſultan thought proper to remind him of them.

Nourjahad received this meſſage with the utmoſt indifference; but without daring to ſhew any mark of diſreſpect. Tell my lord the ſultan, ſaid he, that I would not have been thus long without proſtrating myſelf at his feet, but that I was haſtily ſent for to viſit a kinſman,

whoſe dwelling was ſome leagues from Ormuz; and who in his laſt hours was deſirous of ſeeing me. He died very rich, and has made me his heir. The thouſand crowns a year therefore, my royal maſter may pleaſe to beſtow on ſome one who wants them more, and is more deſerving of his bounty, than I; wretch that I am, to have forfeited my prince's favour! The houſe that his goodneſs beſtows on me, with all gratitude I thankfully accept, as it will daily remind me that Schemzeddin does not utterly deteſt his ſlave. Saying this, he preſented the officer with a handſome diamond, which he took from his finger, and begged him to accept of it as a token of his reſpect for him, and ſubmiſſion to the ſultan's pleaſure.

Though Nourjahad had given ſuch a turn to his acceptance of the houſe, his true reaſon was, that having his treaſure buried in the garden, he thought he could not without great difficulty, and the hazard of a diſcovery, remove it. Thus had he already, in two inſtances, been obliged to depart from truth, in conſequence of his ill judged and pernicious choice.

The houſe which the ſultan had given him, was handſome and commodious; and he thought by enlarging and furniſhing it magnificently, it would ſufficiently anſwer the purpoſe of his town reſidence; beſides, as it was a royal grant, he was ſure of remaining unmoleſted in the poſſeſſion of it.

He now bent his thoughts on nothing but in giving a looſe to his appetites, and indulging without controul in every delight which his paſſions or imagination could ſuggeſt to him. As he was not of an active temper, he put the conduct of his pleaſures into the hands of one, whom he had lately received into his ſervice. This man, whoſe name was Haſem, he found had good ſenſe, and a quickneſs of parts, which he thought qualified him for the truſt he repoſed in him. To him he committed the care of regulating his family, and appointed him the director of his houſehold. In ſhort, under Haſem's inſpection, who on this occaſion diſplayed an admirable taſte, his houſe was ſoon furniſhed with every thing that could charm the ſenſes,

or captivate the fancy. Coſtly furniture, magnificent habits, ſumptuous equipages, and a grand retinue, fully gratified his vanity. By Haſem's diligence his ſeraglio was ſoon adorned with a number of the moſt beautiful female ſlaves, of almoſt every nation, whom he purchaſed at a vaſt expence. By Haſem's care, his board was repleniſhed with the moſt delicious products of every climate; and by Haſem's management he had a choſen band of the moſt ſkilful muſicians of the age; and by Haſem's judgement and addreſs, he had retained in his houſe ſome of the moſt learned and ingenious men of all Perſia, ſkilled in every art and ſcience. Theſe were received into his family for the inſtruction and entertainment of his hours of

reflection,

reflection, if he ſhould chance to be viſited with any ſuch.

Behold him now arrived at the height of human felicity; for, to render his happineſs incapable of addition, he had diſtinguiſhed amongſt the beauties of his ſeraglio, a young maid, ſo exquiſitely charming and accompliſhed, that he gave her the intire poſſeſſion of his heart; and preferring her to the reſt of his women, paſt whole days in her apartment. By Mandana he found himſelf equally beloved; a felicity very rare amongſt Eaſtern huſbands; and longing to unboſom himſelf to one, on whoſe tenderneſs and fidelity he could rely, to her he diſcloſed the marvellous ſtory of his deſtiny. His mind thus diſburthened of this important ſecret, which he had often longed to

divulge,

divulge, but could find none whom he dared to truſt with the diſcovery, he had not one anxious thought remaining. He gave himſelf up to pleaſures, he threw off all reſtraint, he plunged at once into a tide of luxurious enjoyments; he forgot his duty towards God, and neglected all the laws of his prophet. He grew lazy and effeminate; and had not his pride now and then urged him to diſplay to the wondering eyes of the public, the magnificence of his ſtate, he would ſeldom have been inclined to go out of his houſe.

Thus poſſeſſed of every thing that his ſoul could wiſh, he continued for the ſpace of three moons, without any interruption, to wallow in voluptuouſneſs:

When

When one morning juſt as he was preparing to ſet out for a beautiful villa, which Haſem had recommended to him for his rural retirement, and which he purpoſed to buy if it anſwered his deſcription, he was prevented by a meſſenger from the ſultan. It was the ſame perſon who once before had been ſent to him, to forbid him the court. I am ſorry, my lord, ſaid he, on entering Nourjahad's apartment, to be a ſecond time the bearer of unwelcome tidings; but Schemzeddin, hearing of the extraordinary grandeur and magnificence in which you live, a magnificence indeed equal to that of the ſultan himſelf, would needs know whence you derive your wealth, which ſeems ſo much to ſurpaſs that of any of his ſubjects; and has commanded

manded me to conduct you to his preſence, in order to give an account of it.

Nourjahad was exceedingly ſtartled at this unexpected ſummons; but it was in vain to diſpute the ſultan's orders, and he was forced, though with great reluctance, to accompany the officer to the palace of Schemzeddin.

He entered it trembling, fearful to declare a falſehood to his ſovereign, yet ſtill more unwilling to confeſs the truth.

In this ſuſpence the officer left him, to acquaint the ſultan of his arrival. He waited not long before he was admitted to the royal preſence.

Whence

Whence is it, Nourjahad, ſaid the ſultan, that thy imprudence hath drawn on thee the attention of my whole empire, inſomuch that the repreſentations made to me of thy pomp and luxury, now renders it neceſſary to enquire into thy riches. They ſeem indeed to be immenſe. Who was that relation that bequeathed them to thee, and wherein do they conſiſt?

Though Nourjahad had endeavoured to prepare himſelf with proper anſwers to all thoſe queſtions, which he naturally expected would be aſked on the occaſion, he was nevertheleſs confounded; he could not utter the lies he had framed with the unabaſhed look of ſincerity; his

his ſpeech faltered, and his colour changed. Schemzeddin ſaw his confuſion. I perceive, ſaid he, there is ſome myſtery in this affair which thou haſt no mind to diſcover; I pray heaven that thou haſt uſed no ſiniſter means to come at the great wealth which I am told thou poſſeſſeſt! Confeſs the truth, and beware of prevaricating with thy prince.

Nourjahad, frightened at the difficulties he found himſelf involved in, fell at the ſultan's feet. If my lord, ſaid he, will give me a patient hearing, and forgive the preſumption of his ſervant, I will unfold ſuch wonders as will amaze him, and at the ſame time utter nothing but the ſtricteſt truth. The ſultan turned

turned coldly towards him; but by ſeeming to attend to his explanation, encouraged him to proceed.

He then gave a faithful relation of the viſion he had ſeen, with all the conſequences of that miraculous event. Schemzeddin ſuffered him to conclude his narration without interruption; but inſtead of ſhewing any marks of ſurprize, or appearing to credit what he ſaid, looking at him with the utmoſt indignation, Audacious wretch, cried he, how dareſt thou preſume thus to abuſe my patience, and affront my underſtanding with the relation of ſo ridiculous a forgery? Go tell thy incredible tales to fools and children, but dare not to inſult

thy

thy ſovereign with ſuch outrageous falſehoods.

Though Nourjahad was terrified at the ſultan's anger, he nevertheleſs perſiſted in his declaration, confirming all he had ſaid by the moſt ſolemn oaths. The ſultan commanded him to be ſilent. Thou art mad, ſaid he; I perceive now that the riches thou haſt acquired, let the means be what they may, have turned thy brain; and I am now more than ever convinced of the ſordidneſs of thy mind, when the unexpected acquiſition of a little wealth could thus pervert thy judgment, and teach thee to impoſe on thy maſter for truth, the monſtrous chimeras of thy wild fancy. Thy folly be on thy head; for a little, a very

very little time muſt, with the unbounded extravagance of which thou art guilty, diſſipate what thy friend hath left thee; and when thou art again reduced to thy former ſtate, thou wilt be glad to ſue to my bounty for that which thou didſt lately with ſo much arrogance reject. Go, unhappy Nourjahad, continued he, (his voice a little ſoftened) the remembrance of what thou once wert to me, will not permit me to ſee thee fall a victim to thy own deſperate folly. Should it be publickly known that thou haſt thus endeavoured by lies and profanation to abuſe the credulity of thy prince, thou wouldſt find that thy boaſted immortality would not be proof againſt that death, which he ſhould think himſelf obliged, in juſtice to his own honour

honour and dignity, to inflict on ſo bold an impoſtor. Hence, miſerable man, purſued he, retire to thy houſe; and if thou art not quite abondoned, endeavour by a ſober and regular conduct to expiate thy offences againſt heaven and thy ſovereign; but as a puniſhment for thy crime, preſume not, without my leave, to ſtir beyond the limits of thy own habitation, on pain of a more rigorous and laſting confinement.

Nourjahad, thunder-ſtruck at this unexpected ſentence, was unable to reply; and the ſultan having ordered the captain of his guards to be called, committed his priſoner to his hands; telling him if he ſuffered Nourjahad to eſcape, his head ſhould anſwer it.

Filled with reſentment and diſcontent, Nourjahad was conducted back to his own houſe; at all the avenues of which he had the mortification to ſee guards poſted, agreeably to the charge given by the ſultan.

He retired penſively to his cloſet, where, ſhutting himſelf up, he now for the firſt time repented of his indiſcretion in the choice he had made.

Unfortunate that I am, cried he, what will riches or length of days avail me, if I am thus to be miſerably immured within the walls of my own dwelling? Would it not have been better for me to have requeſted the genius to reſtore me to the favour of my prince? Schemzeddin

zeddin always loved me, and would not fail to have promoted me to wealth and honours; mean while I ſhould have enjoyed my liberty, which now methinks, as I am debarred of it, appears to me a greater bleſſing than any I poſſeſs. Unhappy Nourjahad, what is become of all thy ſchemes of felicity! He was even weak enough to ſhed tears, and gave himſelf up to vexation for the remainder of the day.

His mind, however, was by pleaſure rendered too volatile to ſuffer any thing to make a laſting impreſſion on him; and he had ſtill too many reſources of happineſs in his power, to give himſelf up to deſpair. It is true, ſaid he, I am debarred of my liberty, but have I not

ſtill a thouſand delights in my poſſeſſion? The incredulous ſultan, ſatisfied with puniſhing me, will give himſelf no farther concern about me, provided I do not attempt to eſcape; and thus withdrawn from the public eye, envy will not endeavour to penetrate into the receſſes of a private dwelling. I will ſecure the fidelity of my ſervants, by my liberality towards them. Schemzeddin's reſentment will not laſt; or if it ſhould, even as long as he lives, what is his life, the ſcanty portion of years allotted to common men, to my promiſed immortality?

Having thus reconciled his thoughts to his preſent ſituation, he reſolved, in order to make himſelf amends for the reſtraint

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on his perſon, to indulge himſelf with an unbounded freedom in his moſt voluptuous wiſhes. He commanded a banquet to be prepared for him that night, which exceeded in luxury and profuſion any of the preceding. He ordered all his women, of which he had a great number, adorned with jewels and dreſſed in their richeſt habits, to attend on him whilſt he was at ſupper, permitting none but Mandana the favour to ſit down with him. The magnificence of his apartments were heightened by a ſplendid illumination of a thouſand torches, compoſed of odoriferous gums, which caſt a blaze of light that vied with the glories of the ſun. His muſicians, both vocal and inſtrumental, were ordered to exert the utmoſt ſtretch of their art, and

to ſooth his mind with all the enchanting powers of harmony. Himſelf attired in robes, ſuch as the kings of Perſia were uſed to wear, was ſeated under a canopy of ſilver tiſſue, which he had put up for the purpoſe; and aſſuming the pomp of an Eaſtern monarch, ſuffered the illuſion to take ſuch poſſeſſion of his mind, that if he were not before mad, he now ſeemed to be very near diſtraction.

Intoxicated with pleaſure, the hiſtorian who writes his life, affirms that this night Nourjahad for the firſt time got drunk.

Be that as it may, it is certain that having retired to reſt, he ſlept ſounder

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and longer than uſual; for on his awaking, and miſſing Mandana from his ſide, whom he had made the partner of his bed, he called out to the ſlave who always attended in his antichamber, in order to enquire for her, reſolving to chide her tenderly for leaving him.

He called loud and often, but nobody anſwering him, as he was naturally choleric, he jumped out of bed, and ſtepping haſtily into the outer chamber, he found that none of the ſlaves were in waiting. Enraged at this neglect, he called ſeveral of his domeſtics by their names, one after another; when at length, after he was almoſt out of breath with paſſion, a female ſlave appeared,

who was one of thoſe appointed to wait on Mandana.

The damſel no ſooner perceived him, than giving a loud ſhriek, ſhe was about to run away; when Nourjahad, provoked at her behaviour, catching her roughly by the arm, Where is thy miſtreſs, ſaid he, and whence ariſes that terror and amazement in thy countenance? Alas! my lord, anſwered the ſlave, pardon my ſurprize, which is occaſioned by my ſeeing you ſo unexpectedly. Nourjahad now perceiving that in his hurry he had forgot to put on his cloaths, concluded that it was that circumſtance which had alarmed the damſel, and turning from her, Fooliſh woman,

woman, ſaid he, go tell Mandana that I deſire to ſee her. Ah, my lord, replied the maid, I would ſhe were in a condition to come to you. Why, what is the matter, ſaid Nourjahad, no ill I hope has befallen the dear light of my life? Is ſhe ſick? Methinks ſhe went to bed laſt night in perfect health. Laſt night! my lord, replied the ſlave, and ſhook her head. Trifler, cried Nourjahad, what means that motion? Where is thy miſtreſs? Speak! She is, I hope, ſaid the ſlave, gone to receive the reward of her goodneſs! Here ſhe began to weep. Oh Heaven, cried Nourjahad, is my dear Mandana dead? She is, anſwered the damſel, redoubling her tears, and I ſhall never have ſo kind a miſtreſs.

Alas! replied Nourjahad, by what fatal accident am I thus ſuddenly deprived of the adorable creature?

It was not ſuddenly, my lord, replied the ſlave, Mandana died in childbed. Ah traitreſs, cried Nourjahad, how dareſt thou thus mock the ſorrow of thy maſter, and traduce the chaſtity of my beloved. Thou knoweſt it is not more than three moons ſince I received her a virgin to my arms, and doeſt thou preſume to impoſe ſo ridiculous a ſtory on me as that of her having died in childbed? My lord, anſwered the ſlave, it is more than three years ſince Mandana died. Audacious wretch, cried Nourjahad, wouldſt thou perſuade me out of my

ſenſes? With this he pinched the ſlave ſo hard by the arm, that ſhe ſcreamed out.

The noiſe ſhe made brought ſeveral of the ſervants into the room, who, on ſeeing Nourjahad, all ſhewed manifeſt tokens of fear and ſurprize. What is the reaſon of all this, cried he out in a rage, are ye all leagued in combination againſt me? Be quick and explain to me the cauſe of this diſtraction which appears amongſt you.

Haſem, who had run in amongſt the other domeſtics, took upon him to anſwer for the reſt. It is not to be wondered at, my lord, ſaid he, that your ſlaves ſeem ſurpriſed at ſeeing you thus

as it were raiſed from the dead; but if they are amazed, their joy doubtleſs is equal to their wonder; mine I am ſure is unutterable, to behold my lord once more reſtored to his faithful ſervants, after we had almoſt deſpaired of your ever more uncloſing your eyes.

You talk ſtrangely, ſaid Nourjahad, a little ſtaggered at what he ſaw and heard. He juſt then recollected the terms on which he had received the important gift from the genius; and began to ſuſpect that he had endured one of thoſe preternatural ſlumbers, to which he had ſubjected himſelf. How long may I have ſlept, ſaid he? Four years and twenty days exactly, anſwered Haſem; I have reaſon to know, for I counted the

the melancholy hours as they paſſed, and ſeldom quitted your bed-ſide. It may be ſo, ſaid Nourjahad, I have been ſubject to theſe trances from a boy, but this has laſted rather longer than uſual. He then commanded all his ſlaves to withdraw, retaining only Haſem, with whom he wanted to have ſome diſcourſe.

Tell me now, ſaid he, (when they were alone) and tell me truly, is all I have heard real, and is Mandana actually dead? Too true, my lord, replied Haſem, Mandana died in childbed, and dying left her infant ſon to my care. Is my child alive, ſaid Nourjahad eagerly? He is, my lord, anſwered Haſem, and you ſhall ſee him preſently: Mandana

dana called me to her, continued he, when ſhe found herſelf dying.

Haſem, ſaid ſhe, be careful of your lord; Heaven will one day reſtore him to you again. See that you manage his houſehold with the ſame prudence and regularity that you would if he himſelf were to inſpect into your conduct; for be aſſured he will ſooner or later exact a juſt account of your proceedings. Here are the keys of his coffers. I ventured to take them from under his pillow, where I knew he kept them. I have huſbanded his fortune with œconomy, and have hitherto kept order and harmony in his family: On you it reſts to preſerve it in the ſame condition. Nourjahad will not fail to reward your diligence

diligence and fidelity. It is not expedient that any one ſhould know the condition to which he is reduced. His life is governed by a ſtrange fatality. You have nothing to do therefore, but to give out that he is ſeized with a lingering diſtemper, which confines him to his bed. Let no impertinent enquirers ſee him, and all curioſity about him will ſoon ceaſe. Theſe, proceeded Haſem, were almoſt the laſt words that my beloved miſtreſs ſpoke. I have punctually complied with her orders. Your condition has been kept a profound ſecret from every one but your own family, and they all love you too well to betray their truſt. Your women are all immured within the ſacred walls of your ſeraglio, and though they murmur at

their

their ſituation, they fail not to offer up their daily prayers that Heaven would reſtore you to them. I will now, continued he, preſent your ſon to you; it will be ſome conſolation to you to ſee that charming pledge of Mandana's love. Saying this, he withdrew, but ſoon returned leading in the child, who was as beautiful as a little cherub.

Nourjahad melted into tears at the ſight of him, and renewed his complaints for the loſs of his adored Mandana. He ſaw that the child's age ſeemed to agree exactly with the account he had received; and now fully convinced of the truth of his misfortune, Oh Heaven, cried he, claſping the young boy to his boſom, what would I give that my dear

Mandana

Mandana were now here to partake of the pleaſure I feel in this infant's careſſes; gladly would I conſent to have three ages cut off from the number of my years, to have her more precious life reſtored. But my felicity would then be too great, and I muſt ſubmit to the deſtiny which I myſelf have choſen. Prudent Haſem, ſaid he, obſerving he looked ſurpriſed, thou doſt wonder at the words which thou haſt heard me ſpeak, but I will not conceal from thee the marvellous ſtory of my life. Thy fidelity and zeal deſerve this confidence; beſides, it is requiſite that I ſhould truſt ſome diſcreet perſon with my important ſecret, ſince Mandana, on whoſe tenderneſs and loyalty I could depend, is no more.

Nourjahad then acquainted Haſem with the wonderful myſtery of his life. He did not, however, divulge the circumſtance of his concealed treaſure; he judged from his own heart, that it would not be altogether adviſable to lay ſuch a tempting bait in the way even of the moſt virtuous and ſteady mind; but contented himſelf with telling him that his genius conſtantly ſupplied him with riches, as his occaſions required. Haſem liſtened to him with aſtoniſhment; but aſſured him, after what had already paſt, he doubted not a tittle of the truth of what he had been told, amazing and almoſt incredible as it appeared.

My lord, ſaid he, you may ſecurely rely on my zeal and diligence, ſo long as you are pleaſed to entertain me in your ſervice. That I ſhall do during your life, interrupted Nourjahad: But, replied Haſem, what if one of thoſe unmerciful long trances ſhould continue for a length of time much beyond that from which you are but now awakened, and that I ſhould happen to die before you recover your ſenſes, who knows in that caſe what might be the conſequences? It is an accident exceedingly to be dreaded, replied Nourjahad; Heaven knows to what indignities I might be expoſed, perhaps to be buried alive, and condemned to paſs a century or two in a diſmal ſepulchre. The thought makes me ſhudder, and I almoſt repent

of

of having accepted life on ſuch conditions. As I have no warning, continued he, when thoſe fatal ſlumbers will overpower me, (for who can always be guarded againſt the ſtarts of paſſion, or what man is ſo attentive to that impertinent monitor within, as to hear his whiſpers amidſt the hurry of tumultuous pleaſures?) As I know not, I ſay, when I am to be condemned to that ſtate of inſenſibility, or how long I ſhall continue in it, I can only conjure thee if I ſhould happen to be ſeized with another trance during thy life, (which, conſidering my diſpoſition, is not impoſſible) that thou wilt obſerve the ſame conduct which thou haſt lately done; and if the angel of death ſhould ſummon thee away before my ſenſes are looſed from their myſ-

terious

terious bands, that thou wilt with thy dying breath, commit the ſecret to ſome one faithful perſon of my family, whom thou thinkeſt moſt fit to be relied on, for a punctual diſcharge of their duty. As I ſhall never part with any of my ſervants, till the inevitable ſtroke of death ſeparates them from me, and ſhall conſtantly ſupply their places with the worthieſt perſons that can be found, I think I cannot fail of a ſucceſſion of people, from amongſt whom, one at leaſt may always be found, in whoſe ſecrecy and truth I may ſafely confide.

Without doubt, my lord, anſwered Haſem, you may by ſuch wiſe meaſures as theſe, be always guarded againſt the worſt that may befal you.

Though

Though Nourjahad had, by thus providing againſt evil events, exceedingly relieved his mind from the fears by which it was agitated, leſt any ill ſhould happen to him during his ſlumbers; yet was his heart far from being at eaſe. The loſs of Mandana preyed upon his ſpirits. He had no reliſh for the charms of his other women. Mandana's ſuperior lovelineſs was always preſent to his eyes: The delicacies of his table grew taſteleſs; Mandana's ſprightly wit was wanting to give a reliſh to the feaſt. The melodious concerts of muſic with which he was wont to be ſo delighted, now only ſerved to overwhelm him with melancholy: Mandana's enchanting voice was not heard, which uſed to ſwell his heart to rapture.

In

In ſhort, for a time he took pleaſure in nothing but the careſſes and innocent prattle of his little ſon, whom by his tenderneſs and endearments he had taught to love him.

I am unhappy, my dear Haſem, would he often ſay; the loſs of Mandana imbitters all my joys, and methinks I begin to look forward with diſguſt.

My lord, ſaid Haſem, there is nothing which has befallen you but what is common to all. Every one may naturally expect to ſee the death of ſome perſon or other whom they love; but you who are endowed with ſo miraculous a life muſt needs look to drop a tear over a thouſand graves.

Me-

Melancholy reflection, ſaid Nourjahad! it occurred not to me in this light when I made my choice. I knew indeed I muſt of neceſſity bury hundreds of ſucceeding generations; but ſaid I to myſelf, I ſhall inſenſibly contract new amities, as I perceive the old ones are likely to be diſſolved by the hand of time. My heart, ſaid I, ſhall never feel a vacuity, for want of fit objects of deſire. A new beauty will naturally take place of her whoſe charms begin to decline; thus the ardors of love will be ſupplied with perpetual fewel; and upon the ſame principle will the ſocial joys of friendſhip be unremitting. I conſidered the world as a flower garden, the product of which was to delight my ſenſes for a certain ſeaſon. The bloom is not made to laſt, thought I,

but

but it will be ſucceeded by a freſh blow, whoſe ſweetneſs and variety will equal the former, and intirely obliterate them from my memory. I thought not, alas, that before the ſpring ended, a cruel blaſt might ſuddenly deſtroy my faireſt flower.

Would you, my lord, ſaid Haſem, if it were in your power, abſolve your genius from his promiſe, ſeeing your life muſt be perpetually ſubject to ſuch misfortunes?

Not ſo neither, anſwered Nourjahad; time is a never-failing remedy for grief; I ſhall get over this, and be better prepared againſt the next aſſault of evil.

In effect, Nourjahad kept his word, and ſoon returned to his former way of living.

He had the mortification, however, to find himſelf ſtill a priſoner. Haſem told him that the ſultan had not yet taken off the reſtraint, under which he had formerly laid him; and whether it was through forgetfulneſs or deſign, the guards ſtill maintained their poſts about his houſe. This Nourjahad was himſelf convinced of, by ſeeing them from his windows.

It is ſtrange, ſaid he, that Schemzeddin ſhould retain his reſentment againſt me for ſo long a time; eſpecially as

as he might have been convinced of the truth of what I aſſerted, by the extraordinary ſtate in which I have lain all this while. You forget, my lord, ſaid Haſem, that this was an abſolute ſecret, no one from under your own roof knowing a word of the matter. Such was Mandana's laſt injunctions, and your faithful ſervants never divulged a tittle of it.

Did not my friends come to viſit me, ſaid Nourjahad, during that interval in which I ſlept? Thoſe whom you called your friends, anſwered Haſem, came as uſual, during the firſt month of your dormant ſtate; but being refuſed admittance, under pretence that your health was ſo much declined, that you were

not in a condition to receive them, they ſoon deſiſted from their viſits; and finding they could no more be entertained with feaſting and jollity, they have never ſince inquired after you.

Ungrateful wretches, ſaid Nourjahad! I caſt them off for ever. Yet it is an irkſome thing to live without friends. You Haſem are a prudent and honeſt man, but ſtill you are my ſervant; I cannot therefore conſider you on that footing of equality which friendſhip requires. There is one man, ſaid Haſem, who has ſhewn himſelf grateful and compaſſionate; and thoſe two virtues never come alone, but are ever found attended with many others. Oh name him,

him, ſaid Nourjahad. It is Zamgrad, replied Haſem, that officer of the ſultan's whom you once obliged by a trifling preſent of a ring; he never fails ſending every day to enquire after your welfare. Nay, he has often called himſelf, and expreſſed an honeſt ſorrow for the ill ſtate of health to which I told him you were reduced; tenderly blaming the ſultan for his rigorous confinement of you.

Worthy Zamgrad, ſaid Nourjahad, thou, thou alone ſhalt be the choſen friend of my heart; the reſt of my worthleſs acquaintance I from this minute diſcard.

I will write to Schemzeddin, purſued he; perhaps he may now relent and reſtore me to my liberty. I long to ſhift the ſcene, and remove to ſome place where Mandana's image may not be ſo often revived in my memory. Wert thou not, Haſem, about to procure for me a noble ſeat in the country, which I was going to take a view of that day on which the good Zamgrad came to carry me before the ſultan? If I might but retire thither, I ſhould think myſelf happy.

Alas, my lord, replied Haſem, that fine ſeat cannot now be your's. You may remember I made only a condi-

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tional agreement with the owner of it, depending on your approbation of the place after your having ſeen it. I recollect it, ſaid Nourjahad, but may it not ſtill be mine? By no means, anſwered Haſem; the owner has long ſince diſpoſed of it to another.

That is unlucky, ſaid Nourjahad; but we can eaſily find another. Be it your care to look out for one, whilſt I endeavour to move the ſultan in my favour.

Haſem was not ſlow in executing his maſter's orders. In three days he told him he had ſeen a villa, which ſeemed to him to ſurpaſs all the deſcriptions of

Eden in its primary ſtate of beauty. It is but at the diſtance of ten leagues from Ormuz, ſaid he. The houſe and gardens are in compleat order, and you may purchaſe the whole for fifty thouſand pieces of gold. The ſultan himſelf hath not in his poſſeſſion any thing more delightful. I will have it, ſaid Nourjahad: Get the money ready, you have the keys of my coffers, and they contain more than that ſum.

My lord, anſwered Haſem, when you laſt ſaw them they did contain much more; but you will be pleaſed to recollect that it is above four years ſince, and that your houſehold has been maintained during that time; which, notwithſtanding

ing I have uſed the utmoſt œconomy, muſt needs have ſomewhat diminiſhed your treaſury. I had forgot, replied Nourjahad, but I will ſoon ſupply you with the gold you want.

Accordingly he paid a viſit to the ſubterraneous cave that very night; where finding every thing as he had left it, he loaded himſelf with a quantity of gold, ſufficient to prevent the neceſſity of drawing from his hidden ſtore of wealth for a conſiderable time.

Intent now on the purſuit of his pleaſures, he neglected not applying to the ſultan for a repeal, or at leaſt a mitigation of his ſentence. He writ to Schem-

zeddin a letter in terms full of humility; thinking if he could remove his incredulity by convincing him that the extraordinary fact he had related, was nothing more than the truth, that the ſultan would no longer deny him his liberty. He ſcrupled not to acquaint him, that he had been for more than four years in a profound ſleep, for the confirmation of which fact, ſtrange as it might ſeem to his majeſty, he deſired leave to appeal to every one of his own houſehold, and conjured the ſultan to take the trouble of informing himſelf more fully from ſome of his people, whom he might cauſe to be brought into his preſence and privately examined, as he confeſſed he

he did not wiſh to have ſo uncommon an event divulged.

Nourjahad from this expedient had great hopes of obtaining his deſire; but the event turned out contrary to his expectations.

Zamgrad two days after brought him an anſwer from the ſultan in writing: Nourjahad laid the paper on his head, then kiſſing the ſeals, he broke them open, and read as follows.

"I have not been unmindful of thy motions, and I was pleaſed to hear from time to time, that for theſe four years paſt, order and decency have been pre-

ſerved in thy dwelling. I flattered myſelf that this was owing to thy having returned to a ſenſe of thy duty. But my hope deceived me, when I found that Nourjahad was by a violent malady which ſeized him (doubtleſs the effects of his intemperance) diſqualified from indulging in thoſe exceſſes in which he was wont to riot.

"This viſitation from heaven, I thought would have produced ſalutary effects on thy mind, and hoped if the angel of health were again to reviſit thy pillow, that thou wouldſt make a different uſe of thy recovered ſtrength. How muſt my indignation then be rouſed againſt thee, abandoned as thou art to perdi-

tion,

tion, to find thou perſiſteſt in thy enormous folly and wickedneſs; and continueſt to abuſe the patience of thy benefactor and ſovereign maſter, with ſuch unparalleled falſehoods. A prince leſs merciful than myſelf, would no longer delay to puniſh thee with death: But I give thee thy wretched life. Spend it if thou canſt in penitence. Nay, I will ſo far indulge thee, as to permit thee, for the more perfect recovery of thy health, to retire to thy houſe in the country; but at the peril of thy head preſume not to ſtir beyond the bounds of thy own habitation."

Nourjahad now too late found his error in endeavouring to force belief

of

of a thing which appeared ſo incredible; and wiſhed he had rather availed himſelf of the ſultan's prepoſſeſſions in favour of the ſtory propagated by his ſervants, as he found that would have been the wiſer courſe.

What a world is this, ſaid he to Zamgrad, (after having read the letter) where he who ought to be the rewarder of truth, and the diſpenſer of juſtice, ſhuts his ears againſt conviction, and condemns an innocent man for endeavouring to ſet him right? But I will not involve you in the puniſhment impoſed on my imaginary guilt, by requiring your belief of what I have in vain endeavoured

endeavoured to convince the incredulous Schemzeddin.

I know not, my lord, replied Zamgrad, what has paſſed between the ſultan and you; of this only I am certain, that he ſeems exceedingly enraged againſt you. I would it were in my power, from the reſpect I bear you, to mitigate his reſentment.

I thank thee, gentle Zamgrad, ſaid Nourjahad; I find thou, of all my numerous acquaintance, art the only man who has ſhewn any attachment to me. If the friendſhip of one labouring under the diſpleaſure of his prince, be worth thy accepting, I offer thee mine, and

conjure

conjure thee to grant me yours in return. The baſe ingratitude I have already experienced from the reſt of my pretended friends, has determined me to diſclaim all ſociety with them: if thou wilt ſometimes viſit me in my retirement, thou wilt find Nourjahad not undeſerving of thy kindneſs.

Zamgrad promiſed to ſee him as often as he could, and took his leave.

However vexed Nourjahad was at his diſappointment, in finding himſelf, by being ſtill debarred of his liberty, deprived for a time at leaſt from executing one of his favourite purpoſes, that of travelling all over the world, he yet contented

contented himſelf with the reflection, that this project was only poſtponed to another opportunity; and that he ſhould have time enough for executing his deſign, after Schemzeddin, and many of his poſterity were in their graves. I will not waſte my hours, ſaid he, in fruitleſs languiſhment for what I cannot at preſent attain, but make the moſt of the good which now offers itſelf to my acceptance.

He ordered Haſem to pay down the money forthwith, for that fine ſeat: I will remove thither, ſaid he, immediately; and make myſelf ſome recompence by all the means that art can deviſe, for that cruel long trance, which over-

overpowered me ſo unſeaſonably: I hope I ſhall not be viſited by another for theſe fifty or ſixty years at leaſt.

Haſem's diligence kept pace with his lord's impatience: He got every thing in readineſs for his reception at his rural manſion: and to avoid the notice which might be taken of ſo numerous a ſeraglio, and ſuch a train of domeſtics, the prudent Haſem adviſed that they ſhould ſet out and travel by night. This precaution, ſaid he, will prevent the malice of your enemies from making ill-natured repreſentations of your conduct to the ſultan; and as you yourſelf are ſuppoſed by every body in Ormuz to have laboured under a long and painful illneſs, I think,

I think, to give colour to this report, it would be moſt adviſable for you to be carried in a litter. As Nourjahad loved his eaſe, he readily enough conſented to this propoſal, and in this manner ſuffered himſelf to be conveyed to his new habitation.

On his arrival he found Haſem had not exaggerated in his deſcription of this place. The houſe, or rather palace, for ſuch it might be called, infinitely exceeded his expectations; but above all, the gardens were ſo delicious, that his ſenſes were raviſhed with delight. He declared that thoſe manſions of joy prepared for the reception of the faithful, could not exceed them; and forgetting

that

that this paradiſe was to be his priſon, he ordered that a pavilion of light brocade ſhould be reared for him in the midſt of his garden, where he purpoſed to enjoy the cool hours of the evening, amidſt the noiſe of falling waters, and the wild notes of innumerable birds, who had taken up their reſidence in this terreſtrial paradiſe.

Behold him now once more, in the poſſeſſion of every thing, for which the heart of man in the wildeſt wiſhes of Epicurean phrenzy, could pant. He gave the reins to his paſſions; he again became the ſlave of voluptuous appetites: He ſubmitted a ſecond time to the power of beauty; he invented new

modes

modes of luxury; and his delightful abode became the ſcene of every licentious pleaſure.

The delicacies and profuſion in which he himſelf wallowed, made him forget that there were wants or miſeries amongſt his fellow-creatures; and as he had but little intercourſe with mankind, except with thoſe who flattered his follies, or adminiſtered to his looſe pleaſures, he became hardened to all the ſocial affections. He ceaſed to relieve the poor, becauſe they never came in his way; and with a heart naturally generous and benevolent, he lived only for himſelf.

Immerſed

Immerſed in ſenſual gratifications, he loſt all reliſh for any others. The poets and ſages whom he entertained in his houſe, began to grow irkſome to him. He derided the wiſdom and philoſophy of the latter; and if they attempted to entertain him with learned or grave diſcourſes, he laughed at them; and at length thinking their company tedious, he turned them out of his houſe.

His bards would have ſhared the ſame fate, if they had not by a timely addreſs rendered their art ſubſervient to his depraved inclinations. They compoſed nothing but pieces filled with adulation on himſelf, or light verſes in praiſe

praiſe of one or other of his miſtreſſes; theſe were ſet to melting airs, and ſung accompanied by the lute.

Thus did Nourjahad paſs his days. Every riſing ſun beheld ſome freſh outrage on the laws of temperance and decency; and the ſhades of every night deſcended on his unatoned offences.

The delightful ſeaſon of the year, winged with pleaſures, was now almoſt fled, when one of the moſt extravagant projects came into the head of Nourjahad, that ever entered the imagination of man.

As the gardens of his palace were exceedingly delicious, he vainly fancied that they muſt be very like the regions of paradiſe (where all good Muſſulmen are received after death) and that in order to make the reſemblance perfectly complete, he would cauſe the women of his ſeraglio to perſonate the Houriis; thoſe beautiful virgins who are given as a reward to all true believers. He himſelf would needs repreſent Mahomet; and one of his miſtreſſes whom he loved beſt, and who was indeed the handſomeſt of them, he would have to appear under the name and character of Cadiga, the favourite wife of the great Prophet.

The

The idea, wild and profane as it was, was notwithſtanding readily adopted by all the people about him, no one preſuming to diſpute his will. Nor were the women on this occaſion much inclined to do ſo, as it ſerved them for a very agreeable amuſement.

Some debates however aroſe amongſt them on account of the dreſſes proper to be worn on this occaſion; as none of them remembered to have read in the Koran what ſort of habits the Houriis wore; and ſome of the ladies gave it as their opinion that thoſe beauties went naked.

After many diſputes on the ſubject, however, they ſtruck a ſort of medium, and agreed to be attired in looſe robes of the thinneſt Perſian gauze, with chaplets of flowers on their heads.

Nourjahad approved of the invention, and gave orders to Haſem to prepare for this celeſtial maſquerade, with all poſſible diligence; charging him to leave nothing out, that could render the entertainment worthy of Mahomet himſelf.

Neither art nor expence were ſpared on this extraordinary occaſion. He gave commandment that the fountains which adorned his garden ſhould be ſo contrived,

trived, that inſtead of water, they ſhould pour forth milk and wine; that the ſeaſons ſhould be anticipated, and the early fragrance of the ſpring ſhould be united with the more vivid colours of the glowing ſummer. In ſhort, that fruits, bloſſoms, and flowers, ſhould at once unite their various beauties, to imbelliſh this terreſtrial paradiſe.

The diligence of Haſem was ſo active, that every thing was got in readineſs, even ſooner than Nourjahad expected. He deſcended into his garden to take a ſurvey of theſe wondrous preparations; and finding all exactly to his mind, he gave orders to his women to hold them-

ſelves prepared to act their parts; telling them that on that very evening he would give them a foretaſte of the raviſhing pleaſures they were to enjoy, in the happy regions of light.

The weather was extremely hot, and Nourjahad, in order to take a view of the magnificent decorations, having fatigued himſelf with wandering through his elyſium, retired to his apartment, and threw himſelf down on a ſopha, with intent to take a ſhort repoſe, the better to prepare himſelf for the exceſſes of the night: leaving orders with Haſem and Cadiga to awake him from ſleep before ſunſet.

Nourjahad,

Nourjahad, however, opened his eyes without any one's having rouſed him from his ſlumbers; when perceiving that the day was almoſt cloſed, and finding that his commands had been neglected, he flew into a violent paſſion, ſuſpecting that his women had prevailed on Haſem, to grant them this opportunity whilſt he he ſlept, of indulging themſelves in liberties without that reſtraint to which they were accuſtomed in his preſence.

Enraged at the thought, he reſolved to have them called before him, and after ſeverely reprimanding them, and puniſhing Haſem proportionally to his fault, to have his women all locked up,

and poſtpone his feſtivity till he was in a better humour to reliſh it.

Impatient, and even furious at his diſappointment, he ſtamped on the floor with his foot; when immediately a black eunuch preſented himſelf at the door. Go, ſaid he, his words almoſt choaked with indignation, go and bid my women one and all haſten directly into my preſence.

The ſlave retired in reſpectful ſilence; and preſently after all the ladies of his ſeraglio entered his apartment. They were, according to the cuſtom, covered with vails, but on appearing in their lord's

lord's preſence, they threw them off. But, Oh Heaven! what was Nourjahad's anger and aſtoniſhment, when inſtead of the beautiful Houriis whom he expected to ſee, to behold a train of wrinkled and deformed old hags.

Amazement and rage for a while ſuſpended the power of ſpeech: When the foremoſt of the old women approaching, and offering to embrace him, he thruſt her rudely from him: Deteſtable fiend, ſaid he, whence this preſumption? where are my ſlaves? Where is Haſem? and the women of my ſeraglio? The traitoreſſes! they ſhall pay dearly for thus abuſing my indulgence.

The old women at this all fell upon their faces to the ground; but the firſt who had advanced addreſſing herſelf to ſpeak, Avaunt! cried Nourjahad, begone wretches, and rid my ſight of ſuch hideous aſpects.

Alas, my lord, replied the old woman, have you intirely forgot me? has time left no traces to remind you of your once beloved Cadiga? Cadiga! thou Cadiga? do not provoke me, ſaid Nourjahad, or by Allah I'll ſpurn thee with my foot.

The old women now all ſet up a lamentable cry, Miſerable wretches that we

we are, ſaid they, beating their withered breaſts, it had been happy for us if we had all died in our youth, rather than have thus out-lived our lord's affections!

Evil betide ye, ſaid Nourjahad, who in the name of deformity are ye all? Hereupon the beldames cried out with one voice, Your miſtreſſes! the once admired and loved partners of your bed, but the relentleſs hand of time has made ſuch cruel ravage on our charms, that we do not wonder thou ſhouldſt find it impoſſible to recollect us.

Nourjahad now began to ſuſpect that he had been over-powered by a ſecond

trance. Why, how long, in the devil's name, have I then ſlept, ſaid he?

Forty years and eleven moons, anſwered the lady who called herſelf Cadiga. Thou lieſt, I am ſure, ſaid Nourjahad, for it appears to me but as yeſterday ſince I ordered thee (if thou really art Cadiga) to awake me at a certain hour, that I might enjoy the glorious entertainment prepared for me in the gardens of the Houriis.

I do remember it, ſaid Cadiga, and we your faithful ſlaves were to perſonate thoſe beautiful virgins. Alas, alas, we are not now fit to repreſent thoſe daugh-

ters of paradiſe! Thou art fitter, ſaid Nourjahad, to repreſent the furies. I tell thee again, it cannot be many hours ſince I firſt fell into a ſlumber.

It may well ſeem ſo, anſwered Cadiga, buried as your ſenſes have been in forgetfulneſs, and every faculty conſigned to oblivion, that the interval of time ſo paſt muſt be quite annihilated; yet it is moſt certain that you have ſlept as long as I tell you.

Nourjahad upon this examined the faces of the old women one after the other, but finding them ſo totally different from what they once were, he ſwore that he did not believe a word they ſaid.

Thou Cadiga! ſaid he, the black-browed Cadiga, whoſe enchanting ſmiles beguiled all hearts; thou art wonderouſly like her I confeſs!

Yet that I am that identical fair one, anſwered ſhe, I ſhall be able to convince you, from a remarkable ſignature which I bear on my boſom, and which ſtill remains, though the reſt of my perſon is ſo entirely changed.

Saying this, ſhe uncovered her breaſt, on which the figure of a roſe-bud was delineated by the hand of nature. Nourjahad well remembered the mark; he had once thought it a beauty, and made it the ſubject of an amorous ſonnet,

when

when the bosom of the fair Cadiga was as white and as smooth as alabaster.

Convinced by this proof, that these women were really what they pretended to be, Nourjahad could not conceal his vexation. By the Temple of Mecca, said he, this genius of mine is no better than he should be, and I begin to suspect he is little less than an evil spirit, or he could not thus take delight in persecuting me for nothing.

Ah, my lord, said Cadiga, I am not ignorant of the strange fate by which your life is governed. Hasem, your faithful Hasem, communicated the secret to me with his dying breath. Is Hasem dead,

dead, cried Nourjahad? He is, my lord, anſwered Cadiga, and ſo is the worthy Zamgrad. What is become of my ſon, ſaid Nourjahad? I hope he has not ſhared the ſame fate. It were better that he had, replied Cadiga, for it is now ſome five and twenty years ſince he ran away from the governor in whoſe hands the wiſe Haſem had placed him for his education; and having in vain endeavoured to prevail on that honeſt man to bury you, that giving out you were deceaſed, he might take poſſeſſion of all your wealth, finding he could not ſucceed in his unnatural deſign, he took an opportunity of breaking open your cabinet, and ſecuring all the treaſure he could find, ſtole ſecretly away, and has never been heard of ſince.

Ungrateful

Ungrateful viper! exclaimed Nourjahad; and thou cruel genius, thus to imbitter a life, which was thy own voluntary gift; for thou cameſt to me unaſked.

Had not, proceeded Cadiga, myſelf and the reſt of your women conſented to give up all our jewels to Haſem, who turned them into money, we muſt long ere this have been reduced to want; for your unworthy ſon ſtripped you of all your wealth; but Haſem conducted every thing with the ſame regularity and care as if you had been awake, diſcharging ſuch of your domeſtics as he thought unneceſſary, and replacing ſuch as died in your ſervice; and it is not many days

ſince

ſince the good old man was himſelf ſummoned away by the angel of death.

Tell me, ſaid Nourjahad, does Schemzeddin ſtill live?

He does, replied Cadiga, but bending under the weight of age and infirmities, he is become ſo intolerably peeviſh that no one dares ſpeak to him. Indeed he is at times ſo fantaſtical and perverſe, that it is ſecretly whiſpered he is not perfectly in his ſenſes. It may very well be, ſaid Nourjahad, that he is doating by this time, for he cannot be much leſs than ſeventy years old. The genius has in this article been faithful to his promiſe; for I, though nearly of the

ſame age, find myſelf as vigorous and healthy as ever, but I give him little thanks for this, ſeeing he has defrauded me of ſuch an unconſcionable portion of my life.

My lord, ſaid Cadiga, there is one circumſtance which may in ſome meaſure reconcile you to what has already happened. You know, by the ſeverity of the ſultan, you have been the greateſt part of your days a priſoner; which condition, however it might have been alleviated by the pleaſures which ſurrounded you, muſt nevertheleſs have by this time grown exceedingly irkſome, had you all the while been ſenſible of your reſtraint; and you would now probably

bably have been ſo palled with the repetition of the ſame enjoyments, that I know not whether your good genius, has not, inſtead of cruelty, ſhewn an extreme indulgence, in rendering you for ſuch a number of years unconſcious of your misfortune; eſpecially as the ſultan, by what I learnt from Haſem, has, notwithſtanding the length of time ſince he firſt deprived you of your liberty, never reverſed the barbarous ſentence.

What thou haſt ſaid, has ſome colour, replied Nourjahad, and I am very much inclined to think thou haſt hit upon the truth. Sage Cadiga, purſued he, what thou haſt loſt in beauty, thou haſt gained

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in wiſdom; and though I can no longer regard thee with tenderneſs, I will ſtill retain thee in my ſervice, and conſtitute thee governeſs over my female ſlaves; for I muſt have my ſeraglio ſupplied with a new race of beauties. For the reſt of thoſe hags, as I do not know of any thing they are now good for, I deſire to ſee them no more. Be gone, ſaid he to them, I ſhall give orders to Cadiga concerning you.

When Nourjahad was left alone, he began ſeriouſly to reflect on his condition. How unhappy I am, ſaid he, thus to find myſelf at once deprived of every thing that was dear to me; my two faithful friends, Haſem and Zamgrad,

grad, all the blooming beauties of my ſeraglio, who uſed to delight my eyes; but above all, my ſon, whoſe ingratitude and cruelty pierces me more deeply than all my other loſſes; and that rigid ſpirit who preſides over my life, to take advantage of thoſe hours of inſenſibility, to deprive me of all my comforts! Yet why do I reproach my protector for that? the ſame ills might have befallen me, had the progreſs of my life been conducted by the common laws of nature. I muſt have ſeen the death of my friends, and they might poſſibly have been ſnatched from me in a manner equally ſudden and ſurpriſing as their loſs now appears.

My

My women, had I ſeen them every day, muſt neceſſarily by this time have grown old and diſguſtful to me; and I ſhould certainly before now, have diſcarded two or three generations of beauties. My ſon too, would, in his heart, have been the ſame thankleſs and perfidious creature that he has now ſhewn himſelf, had the eye of watchful authority been conſtantly open on his conduct; and there is only this difference perhaps, between me and every other parent, that I have lived to ſee my offspring trampling on filial duty, riotouſly ſeizing on my wealth, leaving my family to poverty, and not ſo much as beſtowing a grateful thought on him who gave him being, and by whoſe ſpoils he is enriched;

whilſt

whilſt other fathers, deceived by a ſpecious outſide, in the full perſuaſion of the piety, juſtice, and affection of their children, have deſcended to the grave in peace, whilſt their heirs, with as little remorſe as my graceleſs child, have laughed at their memories.

I ſee it is in vain, proceeded he, to eſcape the miſeries that are allotted to human life. Fool that I was to ſubject myſelf to them more by ten thouſand fold than any other can poſſibly experience! But ſtop, Nourjahad, how weak are thy complaints? thou knoweſt the conditions of thy exiſtence, and that thou muſt of neceſſity behold the decay and diſſolution of every thing that is mortal;

mortal; take comfort then, and do not imbitter thy days by melancholy reflections, but reſolve for the future to let no events diſturb thy peace, ſeize every fleeting joy as it paſſes, and let variety be thy heaven, for thou ſeeſt there is nothing permanent.

As Nourjahad was never uſed, but on occaſions of diſtreſs, to make uſe of his reaſon or philoſophy, he no ſooner found an alleviation of the evil, than he put them both to flight, as impertinent intruders. He did not therefore long diſturb himſelf with diſagreeable reflections, but reſolved as ſoon as poſſible to return to thoſe pleaſures which he thought

thought conſtituted the felicity of man's life.

He gave himſelf but little concern about thoſe treaſures of which his ſon had robbed him, knowing he had an inexhauſtible fund of wealth, of which, agreeably to the genius's promiſe, he could not be deprived.

From Cadiga he learnt that his houſe at Ormuz was in the ſame condition he had left it; Haſem having taken care to place a diligent and faithful ſervant there, on whom he might rely with equal ſecurity as on himſelf; and he had the farther precaution, added Cadiga, not long

long before his death, to ſolicit, through Zamgrad's means, the ſultan's permiſſion for your return thither. This, ſaid he, may be neceſſary in caſe our lord awakes before Schemzeddin's deceaſe, and ſhould have a deſire to quit this place, he may do it without the trouble of a freſh application.

And has the ſultan granted this, cried Nourjahad?

He has, anſwered Cadiga, as a matter of great indulgence: for having, as he ſaid, heard that your profuſion was unbounded, finding there were no hopes of reclaiming you, he had determined to confine you for the remainder of your

life, with this liberty however, that you might make choice either of this palace or your houſe at Ormuz for your priſon.

Fool, cried Nourjahad, he little imagines how impotent are his threats, when he ſpeaks of confining me for life! I would however *he* were dead, that I might be rid of this irkſome reſtraint; but it cannot laſt much longer, for the days of Schemzeddin muſt needs draw towards a period. I will not, mean while, beſtow any farther thought on him, but avail myſelf of that liberty which he has allowed me, and return to Ormuz; for I am weary of this ſolitude, ſeeing I have loſt every thing that could render my retirement agreeable.

Do

Do thou, ſaid he, ſee that every thing is prepared for my reception. I would have my ſeraglio filled once more, otherwiſe my houſe, when I enter it, will appear a deſert to me, and I ſhall be at a loſs how to divert the tedious hours which may yet remain of my confinement. I will depend on thy experience and ſkill in beauty, to make choice of ſuch virgins, as you think will well ſupply the place of thoſe I have loſt.

I have a friend, ſaid Cadiga, a merchant, who deals in female ſlaves; and he has always ſuch a number, that it will be eaſy to ſelect from amongſt them ſome whoſe charms cannot fail to pleaſe you. I will order him to repair to your

houſe, and bring with him a collection of the rareſt beauties he has in his poſſeſſion; you may then chuſe for yourſelf.

Be it ſo, ſaid Nourjahad, I leave the conduct of every thing to thee; if I approve of the damſels, I ſhall not ſcruple at any price for their purchaſe.

The day being come for his return to Ormuz, full of pleaſing eagerneſs to behold the divine creatures which he was told waited his arrival, he ſet out with a ſplendid equipage, but had the mortification to behold his chariot ſurrounded by a party of the ſultan's guards, with drawn ſabres in their hands, to repreſs

the

the curioſity of thoſe who might approach the chariot, to gaze at the perſon who was conducted in ſo unuſual a manner.

I could well excuſe this part of my retinue, ſaid Nourjahad, as he paſſed along, but there is no reſiſting the commands of this whimſical old fellow Schemzeddin. Being thus conducted to his houſe, the guards as before poſted themſelves round it.

However chagrined Nourjahad was at this circumſtance, he was reſolved it ſhould not interrupt his pleaſures.

He found the young ſlaves whom Cadiga had prepared all waiting his

arrival. They were richly cloathed, and ſtanding together in a row, in a long gallery through which he was to paſs. On his entering, the merchant to whom they belonged, ordered the women to unvail.

Nourjahad examined them one after the other, but none of them pleaſed him. One had features too large, and another's were too ſmall; the complexion of this was not brilliant, and the air of that wanted ſoftneſs; this damſel was too tall, and the next was ill proportioned.

Doſt thou call theſe beauties, ſaid Nourjahad, angrily? By my life they

are a pack of as awkward damſels as ever I beheld.

Surely, my lord, cried the merchant, you do not ſpeak as you think. Theſe young maids are allowed by all good judges to be the moſt perfect beauties that ever were ſeen in Perſia: The ſultan himſelf has none equal to them in his ſeraglio.

I tell thee, man, ſaid Nourjahad, they are not worthy even to wait on thoſe of whom I myſelf was formerly maſter. I know not that, my lord, anſwered the merchant, but this I am ſure of, that I can have any ſum which I ſhall demand for their purchaſe. Then thou muſt

carry them to ſome other market, cried Nourjahad, for to me they appear fit for nothing but ſlaves.

Cadiga, who was preſent, now taking Nourjahad aſide, ſaid, Theſe, my lord, theſe damſels are leſs charming than thoſe of which you were formerly poſſeſſed, but the taſte for beauty is quite altered ſince that time: You may aſſure yourſelf that none will be offered to your acceptance that will exceed theſe. Were I and my companions, whom you once ſo much admired, to be reſtored to our youth again, we ſhould not now be looked upon; ſuch is the fantaſtic turn of the age.

If this be ſo, ſaid Nourjahad, I ſhall be very unfaſhionable in my amours; for the preſent, however, I ſhall content myſelf with ſome of the moſt tolerable of theſe maidens, till I have time and opportunity of ſupplying myſelf with better.

Saying this, he ſelected half a dozen of thoſe young ſlaves, whom he thought the moſt agreeable, and having paid the merchant what he demanded for them, diſmiſſed the reſt.

Nourjahad having now once more eſtabliſhed his houſehold, and perceiving that theſe damſels upon a longer acquaintance were really amiable, expected

to find himſelf reſtored to his former contentment and alacrity of ſpirits. But in this he was deceived. He was ſeized with a laſſitude that rendered his days tireſome. The vacancy he found in his heart was inſupportable. Surrounded by new faces, he ſaw nobody for whom he could entertain either love or friendſhip. This is a comfortleſs life, would he exclaim to himſelf, yet how often, during the date of my exiſtence, muſt this ſituation, melancholy as it is, recur to me. A friend ſhall no ſooner be endeared to me by long experience of kindneſs and fidelity, without which it is impoſſible I ſhould regard him; than death will deprive me of him, as it has already done of Haſem and Zamgrad;

and

and how many bright eyes am I doomed to ſee for ever cloſed, or what is as mortifying to behold, their faded luſtre. There is but one way, ſaid he, to guard againſt thoſe evils: I will no more contract friendſhips amongſt men, nor ever again ſuffer my mind to be ſubdued by female charms. I will confound all diſtinction by variety, nor permit one woman to engroſs my heart; for I find by ſad experience, even after ſuch an amazing length of time, that the bare idea of my dear Mandana, inſpires me with more tenderneſs, than ever I experienced from the fondeſt blandiſhments of all the beauties I have ſince poſſeſſed.

Nourjahad endeavoured to baniſh thoſe melancholy thoughts by others more agreeable; but he had no reſources within himſelf. He had nothing to reflect on, from which he could derive any ſatisfaction. My life, ſaid he, appears like a dream of pleaſure, that has paſſed away without leaving any ſubſtantial effects: and I am even already weary of it, though in fact, notwithſtanding my advanced age, I have enjoyed it but a ſhort time, dating from that period whence my immortality commenced.

He tried to read to divert his diſtempered thoughts; but from books he could

could receive no entertainment. If he turned over the pages of philoſophers, moraliſts, or expounders of the myſteries of his religion, What have I to do with thy tedious leſſons, or dry precepts, ſaid he? Thou writeſt to men like thyſelf, ſubject to mortality; thou teacheſt them how to live, that they may learn how to die; but what is this to me? as I am not ſubject to the latter, thy advice can be of little uſe to me in regard to the former.

He had next recourſe to the poets; but their works gave him as little pleaſure as the others. Abſorbed as he had been in the groſſer pleaſures of ſenſe, he had loſt thoſe fine feelings, which conſtitute

ſtitute that delicate and pleaſing perception we have, of ſuch images, as are addreſſed to the heart. He knew the fallacy and even eſſence of all ſenſual enjoyments; and to the moſt warm deſcriptions of love, and the moſt pathetic pictures of grief he was equally inſenſible.

Poor wretches, ſaid he, on reading a fine elegy written by a lover on the death of his miſtreſs, doomed as thou wert to a ſhort ſpan of life, and a narrow circle of enjoyments, thou magnifieſt every thing within thy confined ſphere. One ſingle object having engroſſed thy whole heart, and inſpired thee with tranſports, thou doſt immortalize her charms.

charms. Her death (deſpairing to ſupply her place) filled thy eyes with tears, and taught thee to record thy own ſorrows with her praiſes. I partake not of thy pleaſures or thy pains; none but ſuch as are liable to the ſame fate can be affected by thy ſentiments.

When he read of the death of heroes and kings, and the deſtruction of cities, or the revolution of empires, How circumſcribed, ſaid he, is the knowledge of a paltry hiſtorian! Who is at the pains of collecting the ſcanty materials which a life of forty or fifty years perhaps affords him, and then he makes a mighty parade of learning, with the poor pittance for which he has been drudging

all

all his days. How infinitely ſuperior will my fund of information be, who ſhall myſelf be an eye-witneſs to events as extraordinary as theſe, and numbered a thouſand times over; for doubtleſs the ſame things which have happened, will happen again. What curioſity can you incite in me, who ſhall infallibly ſee the ſame chain of cauſes and effects take place over and over again, in the vaſt round of eternity.

The accounts of travellers, deſcriptions of the manners and cuſtoms of various countries, and books of geography, afforded him a little more entertainment. All theſe places, ſaid he, I ſhall viſit in my own proper perſon, and ſhall then

be

be able to judge whether theſe accounts are juſt.

Whilſt he endeavoured to fill up the vacuity he found in his mind, his time was ſpent at beſt but in a ſort of inſipid tranquillity. The voluptuary has no taſte for mental pleaſures.

He every now and then returned to his former exceſſes, but he had not the ſame reliſh for them as before. Satiety ſucceeded every enjoyment. In vain did his ſlaves torture their invention to procure new delights for him. The powers of luxury were exhauſted, and his appetites palled with abundance.

He

He grew peeviſh, moroſe, tyrannical; cruelty took poſſeſſion of his breaſt; he abuſed his women and beat his ſlaves, and ſeemed to enjoy no ſatisfaction but that of tormenting others.

In vain did the prudent Cadiga, who had ſtill ſome little influence over him, expoſtulate with him on the enormity of his behaviour.

How dareſt thou, ſaid he, preſume to dictate to thy maſter, or to cenſure his conduct! To whom am I accountable for my actions? To God and our prophet, anſwered Cadiga, with a boldneſs that provoked Nourjahad's wrath. Thou

lieſt,

lieſt, ſaid he, as I am exempt from death, I never can be brought to judgment, what then have I to fear from the reſentment, or hope from the favour of the powers whom thou nameſt?

But haſt thou no regard, ſaid Cadiga, for the laws of ſociety, nor pity for the ſufferings of thy fellow creatures, whom thou makeſt to groan every day under thy cruelty?

Fooliſh woman, ſaid Nourjahad, doſt thou talk to me of laws, who think myſelf bound by none. Civil and religious laws are ſo interwoven, that you cannot pluck out a ſingle thread without ſpoiling the whole texture, and if I cut the woof,

woof, thinkeſt thou that I will ſpare the weft, when I can do it with impunity? The privilege of immortality which I enjoy, would be beſtowed on me to little purpoſe, if I were to ſuffer the weak prejudices of religion, in which I am no way concerned, to check me in any of my purſuits. And what can the feeble laws of man do? My life they cannot reach. Yet thou art a priſoner notwithſtanding, anſwered Cadiga. True, replied Nourjahad, but even in my confinements I have ſurfeited with delights. Schemzeddin's death muſt ſoon give me that liberty, which conſidering the race of uncontrouled freedom I have before me, I do not now think worth attempting. I ſhall then expatiate freely all over the

globe; mean while I tell thee, woman, I am weary of the dull round of reiterated enjoyments which are provided for me; my ſenſual appetites are cloyed, I have no taſte for intellectual pleaſures, and I muſt have recourſe to thoſe which gratify the malevolent paſſions.

Thou art not fit to live, cried Cadiga, with a warmth of which ſhe had cauſe to repent; for Nourjahad, enraged at her reply, plucked a poniard from his girdle, Go tell thy prophet ſo, ſaid he, and plunged it into the ſide of the unfortunate ſlave, who fell at his feet weltering in blood.

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The brutal Nourjahad, ſo far from being moved with this ſpectacle, turned from her with indifference, and quitting the chamber, entered the apartments of his women, to whom with barbarous mirth he related what he had done.

Though he had now loſt all reliſh for delicate pleaſures, or even for the more groſs enjoyments of ſenſe, he nevertheleſs indulged himſelf in them to exceſs; and knowing he was not accountable to any one for the death of his ſlave, he thought no more of Cadiga; but after a day ſpent in extravagant debauchery ſunk to repoſe.

But his eyes were opened to a different ſcene from that on which he had cloſed them. He no ſooner awoke than he perceived a man ſitting at his bed's-foot, who ſeemed to be plunged in ſorrow; he leaned penſively on his arm, holding a handkerchief before his eyes.

What mockery is this, ſaid Nourjahad, didſt thou ſuppoſe me dead, and art thou come to mourn over me?

Not ſo, my lord, replied the man, I knew that you ſtill lived; but the ſultan is dead, the good Schemzeddin is no more! I am glad of it, replied Nourjahad, I ſhall now obtain my liberty. Who then is to reign in Ormuz?

Doubtleſs,

Doubtleſs, my lord, anſwered the man, the prince Schemerzad, the eldeſt ſon of Schemzeddin. Thou raveſt, cried Nourjahad, Schemzeddin has no ſon. Pardon me, my lord, ſaid the man, the ſultana Nourmahal was delivered of this prince the very hour on which the unfortunate Cadiga died by your hand. Thou art inſolent, replied Nourjahad, to mention that circumſtance; but if ſo, we have indeed got a very young ſucceſſor to the throne. My lord, anſwered the man, Schemerzad is allowed to be one of the moſt accompliſhed and wiſe young princes in all Perſia. That is marvellous, cried Nourjahad, burſting into a fit of laughter, a ſultan of four and twenty hours old muſt needs be wonderouſly

wonderouſly wiſe and accompliſhed. Nay, my lord, replied the man, the prince is this day exactly twenty years of age.

(Nourjahad, on hearing this, looked in the face of the man, whom, from his dreſs, ſuppoſing he had been one of his ſlaves, he had not regarded before, but now perceived he was a ſtranger.) Twenty years old! cried he, ſtarting up, thou doſt not tell me ſo! Moſt certain, ſaid the man. Schemzeddin was ſo far advanced in years before the birth of the prince, that he deſpaired of ever having a child; yet had the righteous monarch the ſatisfaction to ſee his beloved ſon arrive at manhood, and

adorned with ſuch virtues as made him worthy to fill his father's throne. When did the old ſultan die, cried Nourjahad? His funeral obſequies were performed laſt night, anſwered the man, and the people of Ormuz have not yet wiped the tears from their eyes. It ſhould ſeem then, ſaid Nourjahad, that I have ſlept about twenty years! if ſo, prithee, who art thou? for I do not remember ever to have ſeen thy face before.

My name, anſwered the ſtranger, is Cozro, and I am the brother of Cadiga, that faithful creature whom thy ungoverned fury deprived of life. How dareſt thou mention her again, cried Nourjahad, art thou not afraid to ſhare

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the ſame fate thyſelf for thy preſumption?

I do not value my life, anſwered Cozro; having acquitted myſelf well of my duty here, I am ſure of my reward in thoſe bleſſed manſions, where avarice, luxury, cruelty and pride, can never enter. Strike then, Nourjahad, if thou dareſt; diſmiſs me to endleſs and uninterrupted joys, and live thyſelf a prey to remorſe and diſappointment, the ſlave of paſſions never to be gratified, and a ſport to the viciſſitudes of fortune.

Nourjahad was confounded at the undaunted air with which Cozro pronounced theſe words; he trembled

with indignation, but had not courage to ſtrike the unarmed man who thus inſulted him; wherefore, diſſembling his anger, I ſee, ſaid he, that thou partakeſt of thy ſiſter Cadiga's ſpirit; but anſwer me, How cameſt thou hither, and in what condition are the reſt of my family? I will tell thee, anſwered Cozro. When Cadiga found herſelf dying, ſhe ſent for me: I was then a page to one of the emirs of Schemzeddin's court. She made me kneel by her bed-ſide and take a ſolemn oath, to perform with fidelity and ſecrecy what ſhe ſhould enjoin me. She then told me the ſecret of your life, and conjured me to watch and attend you carefully. I have hitherto, ſaid ſhe, had the conduct of his houſe; do you

ſupply my place, and do not let Nourjahad, when he awakes from his trance, be ſenſible of the loſs of the unfortunate Cadiga.

She then called in your principal ſlaves, and delivering to me in their preſence the keys with which you had entruſted her, ſhe told them they were henceforth to obey me, as they had done her. Tell my lord, ſaid ſhe to me, that I forgive him the death which his cruelty inflicted on a woman who loved him to the lateſt minute of her life. In pronouncing theſe words, ſhe expired.

I knew not till then, purſued Cozro, that thou hadſt been the murderer of

my ſiſter; but ſhe was no ſooner dead, than the ſlaves informed me of the manner of her death. My reſentment againſt thee was proportioned to the horror of thy guilt; and had I thrown myſelf at the feet of Schemzeddin, and implored juſtice on thy crimes, neither thy riches nor thy immortality would have availed thee, but thou wouldſt have been condemned by a perpetual decree, to have languiſhed out thy wretched exiſtence in a vile dungeon.

And what hindered thee, cried Nourjahad, from purſuing thy revenge, ſeeing I was not in a condition to reſiſt thee? My reverence for the oath I had taken,

taken, anſwered Cozro, and fear of offending the Almighty!

Nourjahad, at this reply, was ſtruck with a ſecret awe which he could not repel; he remained ſilent whilſt Cozro proceeded.

I obtained permiſſion of the maſter whom I ſerved, to leave him, and entered immediately on my new employment; but I found I had undertaken a difficult taſk. Thou hadſt rendered thyſelf ſo odious to thy women, that not one of them retained the ſmalleſt degree of love or fidelity towards thee. In ſpite of my vigilance they made thy hated ſeraglio the ſcene of their unlaw-

ful pleaſures; and at length having bribed the eunuchs who guarded them, they all in one night fled from thy deteſted walls, taking with them the ſlaves who had aſſiſted them in their purpoſe. Pernicious ſpirit, exclaimed Nourjahad, are theſe the fruits I am to reap from thy fatal indulgence! The reſt of your ſervants, purſued Cozro, I endeavoured to keep within the bounds of their duty. And how didſt thou ſucceed, cried Nourjahad? But ill, replied Cozro; they all declared that nothing could have induced them to ſtay ſo long with a maſter of ſo capricious and tyrannical a humour, but the luxury and idleneſs in which thou permittedſt them to live; and finding I managed your affairs with

œconomy,

œconomy, they one after the other left your houſe; neither promiſes nor threats having power to prevent thoſe who ſtayed longeſt in thy ſervice, from following the example of the firſt who deſerted thee; ſo that I alone of all thy numerous houſehold have remained faithful to thee: I, who of all others, had the moſt reaſon to abhor thee! But I have now acquitted myſelf of the truſt which was repoſed in me, and I leave thee as one condemned to wander in an unknown land, where he is to ſeek out for new aſſociates, and to endeavour by the power of gold, to bribe that regard from men, which his own worth cannot procure for him.

Unfortunate wretch that I am, cried Nourjahad, pierced to the quick with what he had juſt been told, what benefit have I hitherto received from my long life, but that of feeling by miſerable experience, the ingratitude and frailty of man's nature. How tranſitory have been all my pleaſures! the recollection of them dies on my memory, like the departing colours of the rainbow, which fades under the eye of the beholder, and leaves not a trace behind. Whilſt on the other hand, every affliction with which I have been viſited, has imprinted a deep and laſting wound on my heart, which not even the hand of time itſelf has been able to heal.

What have thy misfortunes been, ſaid Cozro, that are not common to all the race of man? Oh, I have had innumerable griefs, ſaid Nourjahad. After a ſhort enjoyment (during my fatal ſlumbers) the grave robbed me of Mandana, whilſt ſhe was yet in the bloom of youth and beauty. I lamented her death, tears and heavineſs of heart were my portion for many days. Yet remembering that ſorrow would not recall the dead, I ſuffered myſelf to be comforted, and ſought for conſolation in the ſociety of my other women, and the fond and innocent careſſes of an infant ſon, whom Mandana left me. Joy and tranquillity reviſited my dwelling, and new pleaſures courted my acceptance; but they again

eluded my graſp, and in one night (for ſo it appeared to me) my ſon like an unnatural viper, forgetting all my tenderneſs, plundered and deſerted me. The two faithful friends in whom I moſt confided, had cloſed their eyes for ever; and the beauties of my ſeraglio, whom I had laſt beheld freſh and charming as the lillies of the field, I now ſaw deformed with wrinkles and bending under the infirmities of age.

Yet theſe afflictions I ſurmounted; and reſolved once more to be happy. And wert thou ſo, interrupted Cozro? No, replied Nourjahad, the treacherous joys deceived me; yet I ſtill looked forward with hope, but now awake

to freſh diſappointment. I find myſelf abandoned by thoſe whoſe falſe profeſſions of love had lulled me into ſecurity, and I rouſe myſelf like a ſavage beaſt in the deſart, whoſe paths are ſhunned by all the children of men.

Nourjahad could not conclude this ſpeech without a groan, that ſeemed to rend his heart.

As thou art, ſaid Cozro, exempt from puniſhment hereafter, doſt thou think alſo to eſcape the miſeries of this life? Miſtaken man, know, that the righteous Being, whoſe ordinances thou defyeſt, will even here take vengeance on thy crimes. And if thou wilt look back on

thy

thy paſt life, thou wilt find (for I have heard thy ſtory) that every one of thoſe ſeveral ills of which thou complaineſt, were ſent as ſcourges to remind thee of thy duty, and inflicted immediately after the commiſſion of ſome notorious breach of it.

The death of Mandana was preceded by a brutal fit of drunkenneſs, by which, contrary to the laws of our prophet, thou ſufferedſt thyſelf to be overtaken. Then it was thy good genius, to puniſh thee, plunged thee into that temporary death, from which thou didſt awake to grief and diſappointment: But thou madeſt no uſe of the admonition, but didſt permit thyſelf to be again ſwallowed

up by intemperance; and not content to tread the ordinary paths of vice, thou turnedſt out of the road, to the commiſſion of a crime, to which thou couldſt have no temptation, but the pride and licentiouſneſs of thy heart. Thy profanation of our holy religion, in preſuming to perſonate our great prophet, and make thy concubines repreſent the virgins of paradiſe, was immediately chaſtiſed as it deſerved, by a ſecond time depriving thee of thoſe faculties, which thou didſt proſtitute to ſuch vile purpoſes.

The ills with which thou foundeſt thyſelf ſurrounded on awaking from thy trance, ſerved to no other purpoſe than

to ſtir up thy reſentment againſt the power who governed thy life. And inſtead of reforming thy wickedneſs, thou ſoughteſt out new ways of rendering thyſelf ſtill more obnoxious to the wrath of Heaven. In the wantonneſs of thy cruelty, thou ſtainedſt thy hand in blood; and that ſame night, were thy eyelids ſealed up by the avenging hand of thy watchful genius, and thy depraved ſenſes conſigned for twenty years to oblivion! See then, continued Cozro, if a life which is to be a continued round of crimes and puniſhments in alternate ſucceſſion, is a gift worthy to be deſired by a wiſe man? for aſſure thyſelf, Oh Nourjahad, that by the immutable laws of heaven one is to be a conſtant concomitant

mitant of the other, and that either in this world or the next, vice will meet its juſt reward.

Alas, replied Nourjahad, thou haſt awakened in me a remorſe of which I was never ſenſible before; I look back with ſhame on the deteſted uſe I have made of thoſe extraordinary gifts vouchſafed me by my guardian ſpirit.

What ſhall I do, Oh Cozro, to expiate the offences I have committed? For though I have no dread of puniſhment hereafter, yet does that ætherial ſpark within, inſpire me with ſuch horror for my former crimes, that all the vain delights which this world can afford me,

will

will not reſtore my mind to peace, till by a ſeries of good actions I have atoned for my paſt offences.

If thou art ſincere in thy reſolutions, replied Cozro, the means, thou knoweſt, are amply in thy power. Thy riches will enable thee to diffuſe bleſſings amongſt mankind, and thou wilt find more true luxury in that, than in all the gratifications wherewith thou haſt indulged thy appetites.

It ſhall be ſo, replied Nourjahad; my treaſures ſhall be open to thee, thou venerable old man, and do thou make it thy buſineſs to find out proper objects,

whereon

whereon charity and benevolence may exert their utmoſt powers.

Enquire out every family in Ormuz whom calamity hath overtaken, and provided they did not bring on their diſtreſſes by their own wilful miſconduct, reſtore them to proſperity. Seek out the helpleſs and the innocent; and by a timely ſupply of their wants, ſecure them againſt the attacks of poverty, or temptations of vice. Search for ſuch as you think have talents which will render them uſeful to ſociety; but who, for want of the goods of fortune, are condemned to obſcurity; relieve their neceſſities, and enable them to anſwer the purpoſes for which nature deſigned them,

them. Find out merit wherever it lies concealed, whether with-held from the light by diffidence, chained down and clogged by adverſity, obſcured by malice, or overborn by power; lift it up from the duſt, and let it ſhine conſpicuous to the world.

Glorious taſk! cried Cozro; happy am I in being the choſen inſtrument of Nourjahad's bounty, and ſtill more happy ſhall he be in ſeeing the accompliſhment of his good deſigns.

We muſt not ſtop here, ſaid Nourjahad; I will have hoſpitals built for the reception of the aged and the ſick; and my tables ſhall be ſpread for the refreſh-

ment

ment of the weary traveller. No virtuous action ſhall paſs by me unrewarded, and no breach of the laws of temperance, juſtice, or mercy, ſhall eſcape unreproved. My own example, ſo far as it can influence, ſhall henceforth countenance the one, and diſcourage the other.

Bleſſed be the purpoſe of thy heart, ſaid Cozro, and proſperous be the days of thy life!

Nourjahad now found the anxiety under which he had but a little before laboured, exceedingly relieved. My mind, ſaid he, is much more at eaſe than it was; let us not delay to put our deſign

ſign in execution. I will lead you to the place where my treaſure is concealed, which I never yet diſcovered to any one. Saying this, he took Cozro by the hand, and conducted him to the cave.

Thou ſeeſt here, ſaid he, riches which can never be exhauſted; thou mayeſt perceive that I have not yet ſunk a third part of one of theſe urns which contain my wealth; yet have I with monſtrous profuſion laviſhed away immenſe ſums. Five more ſuch urns as theſe are yet untouched. Thoſe ſix which thou ſeeſt on the right hand, contain wedges of the fineſt gold, which muſt be equal in value to the others.

Theſe

Theſe ſix, which are ranged on the left, are filled with precious ſtones, whoſe worth muſt be ineſtimable: The wealth of Ormuz would not purchaſe a ſingle handful. Judge then, my friend, if I need be ſparing in my liberality.

Cozro expreſſed his aſtoniſhment at the ſight of theſe wonders. If thou wouldſt be adviſed by me, ſaid he, thou wouldſt ſecretly remove from Ormuz, and carry thy treaſures with thee. Thou mayeſt depoſit part of them in each of the different countries through which thou paſſeſt in thy progreſs all over the earth. By this means thou mayeſt have it in thy power to diſtribute with more eaſe thy bounty wherever thou goeſt; and

and be always provided with riches in what part ſoever of the world thou ſhalt chuſe for a time to take up thy reſidence. Thy long abode in this city will draw obſervations on thee ſooner or later; and thy perſon's not having undergone any change from length of time, will bring on thee the ſuſpicion of magic; for tradition will not fail to inform poſterity of thy ſtrange hiſtory.

You counſel well, replied Nourjahad; as I am now at liberty, I will retire from Ormuz. You, my dear Cozro, ſhall accompany me; your prudent counſel ſhall be my guide; and when I ſhall be deprived of you by death, I will ſtill endeavour

endeavour to follow your wiſe precepts.

Come, continued he, I am in haſte to enter on my new courſe of life, let us both go into the city and try to find out proper objects on which to exert our charity. I ſhall paſs without obſervation, and unknown, as few of my contemporaries can now be living, and I will not leave the country which gave me birth, without firſt making it feel the effects of that beneficence which thou haſt awakened in my heart.

Deſerving of praiſe as thou art, ſaid Cozro, thou for the preſent muſt ſuppreſs thy ardor to do good; for though

by the death of Schemzeddin thou art no longer a priſoner, thou art not nevertheleſs yet at liberty to leave thy houſe. Why not? anſwered Nourjahad, who is there now to prevent me?

The young ſultan, replied Cozro, deeply afflicted for the death of his father, and out of a pious regard to his memory, has given ſtrict commandment, that all his ſubjects ſhould obſerve a ſolemn mourning for him, during the ſpace of twenty days; in which time all the ſhops, and places of public reſort (except the moſques) are to be ſhut up, and no buſineſs of any kind tranſacted; nor are any perſons to be ſeen in the ſtreets, excepting thoſe who viſit the ſick,

ſick, and the ſlaves who muſt neceſſarily be employed to carry proviſions, on pain of the ſultan's heavy diſpleaſure.

This edict was publiſhed yeſterday, and the people of Ormuz all love the memory of Schemzeddin, and the perſon of their preſent ſultan too well, not to pay an exact obedience to it.

If ſo, ſaid Nourjahad, I will not by my example encourage others to infringe their duty; yet as the relieving of the poor is in itſelf meritorious, I would not wiſh to be with-held from doing it ſo long as twenty days: How many virtuous people may be during that time pining for want! more eſpecially as this

prohibition muſt cut off all intercourſe between man and man, and deprive many poor wretches of the charitable ſuccour they might otherwiſe receive. I think therefore that thou, Cozro, in thy ſlave's habit, mayſt go forth unſuſpected; and by privately ſeeking out, and alleviating the miſeries of our fellow citizens, do an act of more real benefit, than can reſult from the ſtricteſt conformity to this pageant of ſorrow, which many in their hearts I am ſure muſt condemn.

Cozro approving of theſe ſentiments, readily agreed to the expedient, and taking a large purſe of gold with him to diſtribute as occaſion might ſerve, immediately

diately ſet out in order to execute his lord's commands.

Nourjahad now entered on a total reformation in his way of living. He roſe at day break, and ſpent the morning in ſtudy or meditation. Luxury and intemperance were baniſhed from his board; his table was ſpread with the plaineſt diſhes, and he wholly abſtained from exceſs in wine. His ſlumbers were ſweet, and he found his health more vigorous.

I will no more, ſaid he, enſlave myſelf to the power of beauty. I have lived to ſee the decay of a whole ſeraglio of the faireſt faces in Perſia, and have ſighed

for the ingratitude of the next generation that ſucceeded them. I will not then ſeek out for thoſe deſtroyers of my quiet, for whoſe death or infidelity I muſt for ever complain. Mandana was the only woman who ever really deſerved my love; could I recal her from the grave, and endue her with the ſame privilege of which I am myſelf poſſeſſed, I would confine myſelf to her arms alone; but ſince that is impoſſible, I will devote myſelf to the charms of virtue, which of all things ſhe moſt reſembled.

Whilſt Nourjahad was thus reſolving to correct the errors of his paſt life, his virtue was not merely in ſpeculation. He never laid him down to reſt, without

the ſatisfaction of having made ſome one the better for him. Cozro, who conſtantly ſpent the day in enquiring out and relieving the diſtreſſed, failed not to return every night to give an account of his charitable miſſion, and to infuſe into his maſter's boſom, the (till now unfelt) joy which ſprings from righteous deeds.

The heart of Nourjahad was expanded, and glowed with compaſſion for thoſe ſufferings which Cozro feelingly deſcribed as the lot of ſo many of his fellow creatures. As charity and benevolence roſe in his breaſt, he found his pride ſubſide. He was conſcious of his own unworthineſs. He kneeled, he prayed,

he humbled himself before the Almighty, and returned thanks to God for enabling him to succour the unfortunate.

In this happy frame of mind he continued for eighteen days; there wanted but two more to the expiration of the mourning for the sultan, when Nourjahad was to be at full liberty to pursue in his own person the dictates of his reformed, and now truly generous and benevolent heart.

He was sitting alone in his apartment, waiting the arrival of Cozro, in the pleasing expectation of receiving some fresh opportunity of doing good. The hour of his usual return was already past,

paſt, and Nourjahad began to fear ſome accident had happened to him; but he little knew that a black cloud hung over him, which was ready to pour down all its malignity on his own head.

As he muſed on what might be the occaſion of Cozro's long ſtay, he heard a loud knocking at his door. It was immediately opened by one of his ſlaves, and a man, who by his habit he knew to be one of the cady's officers, rudely entered his chamber.

How comes it, ſaid the ſtranger, that thou haſt had the temerity, in contempt of our ſovereign lord's commands, to

employ thy emiſſary about the city at a time when thou knoweſt that ſo ſtrict an injunction has been laid on all people to keep within their houſes, none being permitted to ſtir abroad but for the abſolute neceſſities of life, or in caſes of imminent danger?

Far be it from me, replied Nourjahad, to diſobey our mighty ſultan's orders; but I underſtood that ſlaves had permiſſion to go unqueſtioned on their maſter's buſineſs. And what buſineſs, anſwered the man, can thy ſlave have from morning to night in ſo many different quarters of the city?

Nourjahad, who did not care to be himſelf the trumpeter of his own good deeds, heſitated to give an anſwer.

Ha, ha, cried the ſtranger, I ſee plainly there is ſomething dangerous in thy myſtery, and that the money which thy ſlave has been diſtributing amongſt ſuch a variety of people, is for a purpoſe very different from that which he pretends. A likely matter it is indeed that a private man ſhould beſtow in charity ſuch ſums as Cozro acknowledges he has within theſe few days diſtributed!

Yet nothing is more certain, replied Nourjahad, than that Cozro has ſpoke

the truth. We ſhall ſee that, replied the officer, in a tone of inſolence; Cozro is already in priſon, and my orders are to conduct thee to him.

Nourjahad, exceedingly troubled at hearing this, replied, He was ready to go with him; and the officer led him out of his houſe.

It was now late at night; they paſſed along the ſtreets without meeting any one, and ſoon reached the place wherein Cozro was confined. It was the priſon where ſuch perſons were ſhut up as were accuſed of treaſon againſt the ſtate.

Here he found the unfortunate Cozro in a dungeon. Alas, cried he, as ſoon as his maſter entered, why do I ſee thee here? Say rather, my dear Cozro, replied Nourjahad, what ſtrange fatality has brought *thee* to this diſmal place?

I can give no other account, anſwered Cozro, but that in returning home this night, I was ſeized on in the ſtreet by ſome of thoſe ſoldiers who were employed to patrol about the city, to ſee that the ſultan's orders were punctually obſerved; and being queſtioned concerning my buſineſs, I told them that I had been relieving the wants of indigent people, and ſaving even from periſhing,

ſome

ſome poor wretches who had not where-withal to buy food.

That is an idle errand, replied one of them, and might have been deferred till the term of mourning was expired; however, if you will give me a piece of gold, I will let you paſs for this time, otherwiſe both you and your employer may happen to repent of having tranſgreſſed the ſultan's commands. I made no ſcruple, purſued Cozro, to take out my purſe, in which there were ten ſequins left. I gave one of them to the ſoldier, but the rapacious wretches ſeeing I had more money, were not content with this, but inſiſted on my giving the whole amongſt them. I refuſed;

ſome

ſome angry words enſued; one of the miſcreants ſtruck me, and I returned the blow. Enraged at this, they hurried me before the cady, to whom they accuſed me of having diſobeyed the edict, and aſſaulted the ſultan's officers in the diſcharge of their duty. I was not heard in my defence, having four witneſſes againſt me, but was immediately dragged to this horrid priſon; and the ſultan himſelf, they ſay, is to take cognizance of my offence.

Oh, Heaven, cried Nourjahad, to what miſchiefs does not the love of gold expoſe us! See, my friend, into what miſfortunes thou art plunged by the ſordid avarice of thoſe vile ſoldiers. But why,

why

why didſt thou heſitate to give up that paltry ſum which thou hadſt in thy purſe, to obtain thy liberty? I do not repent what I have done, anſwered Cozro, and ſhall contentedly ſuffer the penalty I have incurred, ſince it was in ſo good a cauſe.

If the ſultan is juſt, replied Nourjahad, the puniſhment ought only to fall on me, who alone am guilty, ſince what thou didſt was by my command.

Here the officer who had conducted Nourjahad to priſon, and who was preſent at this diſcourſe, interpoſed, and addreſſing himſelf to Nourjahad, Thou haſt not as yet been accuſed to the ſultan,

ſaid

ſaid he, and it is not too late to extricate even thy ſlave from this troubleſome affair; it is but making a handſome preſent to the cady, and I will undertake this matter will go no farther. I am willing to do ſo, replied Nourjahad, eagerly; name your demand, and you ſhall have it. Provided I am allowed to go home to my own houſe, I will fetch the money; and if you are afraid of my eſcaping, you yourſelf may bear me company.

I will not conſent to it, replied Cozro; neither liberty nor life are worth purchaſing on baſe conditions. I will ſubmit my cauſe to Schemerzad's juſtice; the cauſe of uprightneſs and truth; my

own

own innocence shall be my support, and I will dare the worst that fraud and malice can suggest against me.

In vain did Nourjahad urge him to accept the profered terms; he remained inflexible to all the arguments he could use to persuade him; wherefore, finding him determined, he was obliged to desist; and Cozro, after passing the remainder of the night in quiet and profound sleep, though without any other bed than the bare earth, was at dawn of day called forth to appear before the sultan.

The reflections Nourjahad made on the resolute behaviour of Cozro, served

not

not a little to fortify his mind. How noble muſt this man's ſoul be, ſaid he, which ſets him thus above the reach of adverſity? and with what contempt he looks down on the glorious proſpects he has before him, when put in the balance with his integrity. Surely it is not in this life he places his happineſs, ſince he is ſo ready to forego the pleaſures he might enjoy with me, in that participation of wealth and liberty which I have promiſed him. How ſuperior is my ſervant to me, who but for his example, ſhould now ſink under my fears; but he has reſources which I have not. Alas, why did I barter my hopes of paradiſe for the vain, the tranſitory,

the

the fallacious joys which this vile world beſtows! Already I have tried them; what do they inſpire but ſatiety and diſguſt. I never experienced true contentment, but during the time, ſhort as it is, ſince I abjured thoſe follies in which I once delighted: And I am now perſuaded, that after having paſt a few, a very few years more in the enjoyment of ſuch gratifications as I have not yet had an opportunity of taſting, that I ſhall grow even weary of the light, and wiſh to be diſmiſſed to that place, where we are told no ſorrows can approach.

Nourjahad was buried in theſe reflections, when he was rouſed by the return

return of Cozro. The glimmering light which a lamp afforded, ſtruck full on the face of his friend (for he no longer conſidered him as a ſervant) and he rejoiced to ſee Cozro's chearful countenance, by which he judged that he had nothing to fear.

I am come, ſaid Cozro, approaching Nourjahad, and kiſſing his hand, to bid thee adieu, for from this day, we are to be for ever divided! It is that thought only which makes our ſeparation grievous: Had I hopes of ever beholding thy face in the manſions of light, I ſhould go to death with the ſame alacrity with which I cloſe my eyes in ſlumber.

Good

Good Heaven, cried Nourjahad, doeſt thou talk of death? Can it be, is it poſſible that thy life is in danger?

What is the life, about which thou art anxious? replied Cozro; our being here is but a ſhadow; that only is real exiſtence which the bleſſed enjoy after their ſhort travel here. And know, Oh Nourjahad, I would not yield up my expectations of the humbleſt place in paradiſe for the ſovereign rule of the whole earth, though my days were to be extended to the date of thy life, and every wiſh of my ſoul gratified to the utmoſt. Think then, with how little reluctance I ſhall leave a world, wherein

I am

I am ſure of meeting nothing but oppreſſion, treachery, and diſappointment, where mercy is conſtrued into treaſon, and charity is called ſedition!

And art thou then doomed to die? ſaid Nourjahad, pale and trembling at the thought, though convinced it was a predicament in which he could never ſtand.

I am, anſwered Cozro, my offence was found capital. Diſobedience to the ſultan's edict alone, incurred a heavy puniſhment; but my crime was, by the malice of my accuſers, ſo highly aggravated, that the penalty became death.

They

They charged me with having diſtributed money for evil purpoſes, amongſt perſons diſaffected to the ſtate, and with having beat and abuſed thoſe officers who firſt detected me. In vain did I offer all the pleas that truth could ſuggeſt; my enemies, exaſperated at loſing the ſum which they hoped to have extorted from you, ſwore to the facts of which I was accuſed, and the rigid ſultan condemned me to death. What thy fate is to be, I know not; but ſince it is thy misfortune to be doomed to perpetual life, better purchaſe thy freedom on any terms, than be condemned to languiſh for years in a priſon, for ſuch probably will be thy lot.

Oh

Oh that I could die with thee! ſaid Nourjahad, miſerable that I am, thus to be deprived of thy counſel and friendſhip, at a time when I ſo much ſtood in need of them; but wherefore, my friend, why ſhould we ſubmit to the tyranny of the ſultan? though thou art condemned, there may yet be found means to deliver thee. The keeper of the priſon will gladly ſet a price on thy liberty; a hundred thouſand pieces of gold ſhall be thy ranſom; and I ſhall think myſelf rich by the purchaſe! And what is to become of thee, replied Cozro? I will buy my own freedom at the ſame rate, anſwered Nourjahad, and we will both fly from Ormuz together. And leave

your treaſures behind you, cried Cozro, for it will be impoſſible to convey from hence ſuch a vaſt maſs of riches without diſcovery.

I value them no longer, ſaid Nourjahad; they can never yield me any permanent enjoyment. The ſaving thy life is the only good turn I now expect from them. That once accompliſhed, I ſhall deſire to retain no more of them than what will ſupport me above want, and I will leave the reſt to be for ever hid in the boſom of the earth, where they now lie, that they may never more become a ſnare to others as they have been to me.

Praiſed be our holy prophet, ſaid Cozro, that has at length endued the heart of Nourjahad with wiſdom. Purſue the purpoſes of thy ſoul; effect thy own freedom as ſoon as poſſible, ſince no comfort can viſit thee in the gloom of this frightful priſon; but tempt not Cozro back to a life which he deſpiſes. I tell thee again, there is nothing in this world to be put in competition with the glories I have in proſpect in that ſtate to which I am now haſtening. Why then, Nourjahad, wouldſt thou retard my felicity, or wiſh me to hazard, for the ſake of deluſive pleaſures, thoſe tranſcendent joys which await the virtuous.

The energy with which Cozro delivered himſelf, pierced Nourjahad to the inmoſt ſoul. A holy ardor was kindled in his breaſt, which he had never felt before; he found his faculties enlarged, his mind was tranſported above this world; he felt as it were unimbodied, and an involuntary adjuration burſt from his lips. 'Oh, holy prophet, ſaid he, 'take, take back the gift, that I in the 'ignorance and preſumption of my heart 'ſo vainly ſought, and which too late I 'find a puniſhment inſtead of a bleſſing! 'I contemn riches, and for ever caſt them 'from me; ſuffer me then to yield up 'my life; for there can be no true hap-'pineſs but in beholding thee, Oh Ma-'homet,

'homet, face to face, in the never-
'fading fields of paradiſe!'

Saying this, he proſtrated himſelf on the ground, and continued for ſome time in mental prayer.

Cozro obſerved an awful ſilence whilſt he continued in this poſture. When Nourjahad aroſe from the earth, May our great prophet, ſaid Cozro, hear your prayers; and were he even now to grant them, all the favours he has already beſtowed on you would be poor and contemptible to this laſt beſt boon. Farewel, ſaid he, I muſt now leave thee, I was only permitted to come and bid thee adieu. May the Supreme grant

thy petition, then ſhall we again meet in the manſions of happy ſpirits. Nourjahad embraced him, and Cozro withdrew.

Being now left at liberty to his own thoughts, he made bitter reflections on the ſtrangeneſs of his fate. Fool, fool that I was, cried he aloud, beating his breaſt, to prefer ſo raſh, ſo impious a petition to the prophet, as to deſire the everlaſting laws of nature to be overturned, to gratify my mad luxurious wiſhes. I thought the life of man too ſhort for the enjoyment of thoſe various and unbounded pleaſures which wealth could procure; but it is long ſince I have found my error. Well did my guardian

ſpirit

ſpirit ſay I ſhould repent of the gift I had implored, when it ſhould be too late. I do indeed repent; but Oh, thou benign intelligence, if thou haſt remaining any favour for thy inconſiderate unhappy charge, deſcend once more to my relief, and if poſſible reſtore me to that ſtate, for which I was deſigned by my creator; a poor mortal, liable to, and now longing for the friendly ſtroke of death.

He had ſcarce pronounced theſe words, when his priſon doors flew open; a refulgent light flaſhed in, which illuminated the whole dungeon, and he beheld his guardian genius ſtanding before him, exactly as he had appeared to

him before. Thy prayers are heard, ſaid he, Oh ſon of frailty, and thy penitence is accepted in the ſight of the Moſt High. I am ſent down again by our prophet to reaſſume that gift which thou art now ſatisfied muſt make thee miſerable. Yet examine thy heart once more before I pronounce thy irrevocable doom; ſay, art thou willing again to become ſubject to the common lot of mortals?

Moſt willing, replied Nourjahad; yet I wonder not, my ſeraphic guide, that thou ſhouldſt doubt the ſtability of my mind; but in this laſt purpoſe of it I am ſure I ſhall remain unſhaken.

If

If ſo, replied the ſhining viſion, thy guardian angel conſigns thee to the arms of death, with much more joy than he conferred on thee riches and immortality. Thou haſt nothing more to do, than to proſtrate thyſelf with thy face to the earth. Remain this evening in fervent prayer, and await what ſhall befal thee to-morrow.

Nourjahad made no reply, but falling with his face to the ground, he ſoon found the dungeon reſtored to its former gloom, the light and the guardian ſpirit vaniſhing together in an inſtant.

He continued in devout prayer till night; when the keeper of the priſon entered his dungeon to bring him ſome refreſhment.

The ſultan, ſaid he, purpoſes to examine you to-morrow, and much I fear you will have as rigorous a ſentence paſſed on you, as that which has been already executed on Cozro. Is he then dead, cried Nourjahad, mournfully? He is, replied the keeper; it is but an hour ſince I ſaw him deprived of breath; but he received the blow with ſuch an heroic firmneſs, that thou wouldſt have thought he rather enjoyed a triumph, than ſuffered an ignominious death.

Happy

Happy, happy Cozro! cried Nourjahad; thou art now beyond the reach of misfortune, whilſt I, perhaps, may be doomed to ſuſtain for years a wretched life.

Thy life, ſaid the keeper, may be nearer a period than thou art aware of. The ſultan is covetous, and ſurrounded by needy favourites, whom the report of your immenſe wealth has made eager for your deſtruction; for you cannot be ignorant, that ſhould you die, involved as it is ſaid you are, in Cozro's guilt, your treaſures would be confiſcated to the ſultan. From this circumſtance I have heard it whiſpered, your head is already devoted; and this perhaps was

the true cauſe of Cozro's death, and will give the better colour to your's. It is not, however, added he, even yet too late to prevent the danger; had not your ſlave been obſtinate, he might now have been alive, and out of the reach of harm. You have the ſame means of preſervation in regard to your own perſon, ſtill in your power; and if you will make it worth my while to run the riſque, I will this night ſet you at liberty.

And doſt thou think, ſaid Nourjahad, that I have profited ſo little by the example of my noble friend, as to accept of thy offer, ſordid and treacherous as thou art? If thou art baſe enough to betray thy truſt for gold, know that the mind

mind of Nourjahad is above receiving a favour from ſuch a wretch. As for my wealth, let the ſultan take it; my only wiſh is to part with that and my life alſo.

That wiſh may ſpeedily be accompliſhed, ſaid the keeper, in an angry tone, and to-morrow perhaps you may repent of your folly, when you find yourſelf condemned to follow your noble friend to the other world. Nourjahad made no reply; and the keeper ſullenly departed.

Nourjahad ſpent the night in prayers and meditation; he found peace and tranquillity reſtored to his breaſt, and perfectly

perfectly reſigned to the will of the prophet, he waited the event of the next day with the utmoſt compoſure.

In the morning the keeper of the priſon entered to him. Follow me, ſaid he; thou art going to appear before the ſultan, who himſelf is to be thy judge; a rigorous one thou wilt find him, but thy folly be on thy own head, who didſt proudly refuſe the profer I made thee of liberty and life.

Lead on, ſaid Nourjahad, it is not for ſuch men as thou art, to cenſure a conduct, to which thou doſt not know the motive.

He

He was now carried out of the dungeon, and ordered to aſcend a chariot, in which the captain of the ſultan's guards was already placed, to receive his priſoner. The chariot was ſurrounded by ſoldiers; and in this manner he was conducted to the preſence of the ſultan.

Schemerzad was ſeated on a throne, in the hall of his palace, wherein he was uſed to diſtribute juſtice. The emirs, and great officers of his court, were ſtanding round him.

Nourjahad ſtood before him with his eyes bent to the ground; and however awed he might be at the preſence of his

royal maſter, and the auguſt aſſembly which ſurrounded him, yet the dignity of conſcious innocence, and the perfect reliance he had on the Supreme Judge of *his* judge, rendered him ſuperior to every thing. His deportment was modeſt and reſpectful, yet did he diſcover no ſymptom of fear.

The ſultan made a ſign for every one preſent to withdraw, but one perſon who ſtood on the lower ſtep of his throne, and whom Nourjahad judged to be his prime viſier.

What haſt thou to ſay, preſumptuous man, ſaid Schemerzad, in a ſtern voice, what excuſe canſt thou offer for daring,

in

in contempt of my edict, to employ thy agent (during the time ſet apart for mourning) in going about the city from day to day; oſtentatiouſly diſplaying thy ill-timed liberality amongſt my ſubjects; endeavouring, as I am informed, to conciliate their affections, for purpoſes dangerous to me, and the ſafety of my crown. What haſt thou to offer in anſwer to this charge?

Nourjahad proſtrated himſelf to the ground. Mighty ſultan, ſaid he, I have nothing to offer in extenuation of my fault, with regard to the firſt part of the charge. I acknowlege that I diſtributed money amongſt your majeſty's ſubjects, and that at a time too when every act (but

thoſe

thoſe of abſolute neceſſity) was interdicted. I offer not to palliate this breach of my duty.—

Audacious wretch, interrupted the ſultan, to what end was thy profuſion employed?

To obtain a bleſſing from heaven, anſwered Nourjahad; and by relieving the wants and afflictions of others, to make ſome atonement for my own riotous and intemperate abuſe of that wealth, which ought to have been employed to better purpoſes.

Wouldſt thou perſuade me then, cried Schemerzad, that charity was thy motive!

tive! It was, illuſtrious ſultan, replied Nourjahad; I have ſpoke the truth, and to convince your majeſty that I have no ſiniſter deſigns againſt the ever ſacred perſon of my ſovereign, I will now voluntarily yield up that treaſure to thee, which had I been vile enough to have ſo employed, would have bought the fidelity of more than half thy ſubjects, though every man of them had ſtood near the heart, and throne of Schemerzad.

The undaunted manner in which Nourjahad ſpoke theſe words, made Schemerzad ſhake on his imperial ſeat; but quickly reaſſuming the majeſty of his

his ſtation, Do then as thou haſt ſpoken, ſaid he, and I will believe thee.

If your majeſty will permit me, ſaid Nourjahad, to go to my houſe, and will ſend a proper perſon with me, I will deliver up into his hands all my wealth, requeſting no more than will ſupply my wants ſo long as heaven permits me to live.

I will not truſt thee out of my ſight, ſaid Schemerzad; thou mayeſt as well inſtruct ſome one in my preſence where to find the riches of which I hear thou art poſſeſſed, and I will ſend for them.

Nourjahad

Nourjahad then informed the ſultan of the ſubterraneous cave in his garden; and delivering him the key, told him he would there find all the wealth of which he was maſter.

Schemerzad immediately diſpatched his viſier, ordering him to have the riches he ſhould find, immediately conveyed to his treaſury. He then commanded Nourjahad to retire into a ſaloon, that was ſeparated from the hall only by a curtain, and there wait the return of the viſier; before whom, the ſultan ſaid he had ſome farther queſtions to put to him.

As

As the gardens of Nourjahad joined to thoſe belonging to the royal palace, the viſier was not long in going and returning. Nourjahad heard him talk to Schemerzad, and ſtraight he was called on to come forth, and ſtand before the ſultan: But Schemerzad now accoſted him in a voice like thunder. Perfidious and inſolent ſlave, ſaid he, art thou not afraid of inſtant death falling on thee, for daring thus to falſify before thy ſovereign lord and maſter? Say, before thou art cut off by torture from the face of the earth, where thou haſt concealed thy wealth! for well thou knoweſt, there is nothing contained in that cave, which

thou

thou pretendeſt with ſo much care to lock up.

Nothing! replied Nourjahad, in amazement. By the head of our prophet, when I laſt was there, it contained more than would purchaſe thy whole empire a thouſand times over. It was but the very day on which I was dragged to priſon, that I ſaw it; the key has never ſince been out of my pocket; who then could poſſibly have conveyed away my treaſure?

As Nourjahad applied himſelf to the viſier whilſt he ſpoke, that miniſter thinking himſelf reflected on by his words, replied ſcornfully, Thou thinkeſt perhaps

perhaps it is I who have robbed thee, and that I have framed this ſtory to deceive the ſultan, and ruin thee. I do not ſay ſo, anſwered Nourjahad; but this I am ſure of, that no human being but thyſelf knew where to find my treaſure. Some dæmon, perhaps, replied the viſier, with an air of contempt, has removed it thence.

Nourjahad now recollecting ſuddenly, that his guardian ſpirit had probably reclaimed this, as well as the other gift, replied coolly, It is not at all unlikely; a certain genius, who watches over my motions, has undoubtedly carried away my wealth.

Do not think, ſaid the ſultan, that affecting to be out of thy ſenſes, ſhall preſerve thee from my wrath.

Your majeſty, ſaid the viſier, had beſt order that his head be inſtantly ſtruck off, for daring to impoſe on your credulity, and abuſe your clemency in ſuffering him to out-live that ſlave, who obſtinately perſiſted in refuſing to diſcover his maſter's riches.

Did Cozro do ſo? cried Nourjahad: He did, anſwered the viſier; but we will ſee whether thou wilt perſevere in the denial, and to the lateſt minute of thy life preſerve the firmneſs of thy ſlave.

And who is it that thou calleſt a ſlave, thou miniſter of cruelty? ſaid Nourjahad boldly: The ſoul of Cozro raiſed him infinitely more above thee, than the rank of the ſultan of Perſia lifts him above the meaneſt of his ſubjects.—My lord, purſued he, throwing himſelf at Schemerzad's feet, I have no other plea to offer for my life; I call Heaven to witneſs I have ſpoken nothing but the truth; the ſevereſt tortures you can inflict on me will extort no more. I was willing to make a voluntary ſacrifice of my riches: I am now as ready to yield my life.

Art thou not then afraid to die? ſaid Schemerzad.

No,

No, mighty ſultan, anſwered Nourjahad, I look upon death to a virtuous man, as the greateſt good the Almighty can beſtow!

The ſultan, inſtead of making any reply, clapped his hands; and Nourjahad ſuppoſing it was a ſignal to have him ſeized and carried to execution, roſe up, and ſtood with an intrepidity in his looks, that ſhewed how little he was affected with the near proſpect of death.

But inſtead of the ſlaves whom he expected to ſee coming to lay hold on him, he beheld ſtanding cloſe to the throne of Schemerzad, his guardian genius, juſt in

the ſame celeſtial form in which he had twice before appeared to him!

Awed and amazed, Nourjahad ſtarted back, and gazed at the heavenly viſion. Not daring to truſt his ſenſes, he remained mute, and motionleſs, for ſome minutes; but he was rouſed from his deep attention, by a loud burſt of laughter, which broke at once from the ſultan, the viſier, and the guardian genius.

This new and extraordinary incident threw Nourjahad into freſh aſtoniſhment; when, without giving him time to recover himſelf, the angelic youth, ſnatching from his head a circlet of

flowers

flowers intermixed with precious ſtones, which encompaſſed his brows, and ſhaded a great part of his forehead; and at the ſame time throwing off a head of artificial hair which flowed in golden ringlets down his ſhoulders; a fine fall of brown hair which was concealed under it ſucceeded, dropping in light curls on his neck and bluſhing cheeks; and Nourjahad, in the perſon of his ſeraphic guide, diſcovered his beloved and beautiful Mandana!

Whatever tranſports the ſight of her would at another time have inſpired in the breaſt of Nourjahad, his faculties were now too much abſorbed in wonder, to leave room for any other paſſion.

Wherefore, not daring to approach her, the ſultan, willing to put an end to his ſuſpence, cried out, Look up, Nourjahad, raiſe thy eyes to thy maſter's face, no longer the angry Schemerzad, thy offended prince, but the real Schemzeddin, thy friend and kind protector.

Nourjahad, who before, out of reſpect and awful diſtance, had not ventured to look in the ſultan's face, now fixed his eyes earneſtly upon him. By the life of Schemerzad, ſaid he, if I were not certain that all this is illuſion, and that thy illuſtrious father, my royal and once beloved maſter, is dead, thou art ſo very like him, that I ſhould ſwear that thou wert the real ſultan Schemzeddin

zeddin himſelf; ſuch at thy years was his countenance and features.

The ſultan at this burſt into a ſecond fit of laughter. And for whom, ſaid the viſier, (who had by this time taken off his turban, and a falſe beard which he wore) for whom wouldſt thou take me?

By Mahomet, cried Nourjahad, falling back a ſtep or two, I ſhould take thee for my old friend Haſem, if I were not convinced that the good man died above twenty years ago.

It is time, ſaid the ſultan, deſcending from his throne, and taking Nourjahad

by the hand, it is now time to undeceive thee, and explain to thee the myſtery of all thoſe extraordinary events, which ſeem to have bewildered thy ſenſes.

Know then, Nourjahad, that the adventure of thy guardian genius was all a deception, and a piece of machinery of my contrivance. You are now convinced, by the evidence of your own eyes, that your celeſtial intelligence was no other than this young damſel.

I had a mind to make trial of thy heart, and for this purpoſe made choice of this charming virgin, for whom I own I had entertained a paſſion, but found I could not gain her affections. She had

ſeen

ſeen you from the windows of the womens apartments, walking with me in the gardens of the ſeraglio, and had conceived a tenderneſs for you, which ſhe frankly confeſſed to me, declaring at the ſame time, ſhe would never give her love to any other. Though ſhe was my ſlave, I would not put a conſtraint upon her inclinations; but told her, if ſhe would aſſiſt me faithfully in a deſign I had formed, I would reward her, by beſtowing her on you.

She readily aſſented to my propoſal, and having previouſly prepared every thing for my purpoſe, I equipped her as you ſee.

It was not difficult for me to introduce her into your chamber, by a private door which you know communicates between your apartments, and certain lodgings in my palace.

I myſelf ſtood at the door, whilſt ſhe entered as you ſlept, and contrived to throw that light into your chamber, which diſcloſed to you the wonderful viſion. I overheard all your diſcourſe, and could ſcarce contain my laughter, when you ſo greedily received that marvellous eſſence from Mandana; which you ſuppoſed would confer immortality; but which was in reality nothing more than a ſoporific drug, of ſo potent a nature,

nature, that the fumes of it alone, were capable of throwing the perſon who ſmelt to them into a profound ſleep. It had quickly this effect on you; and I took that opportunity of conveying into your chamber thoſe coffers which you thought contained ſuch immenſe treaſures; but which in truth were as great counterfeits as your guardian angel. The ſuppoſed precious ſtones, were nothing more than falſe gems, which I procured from a ſkilful lapidary, who had given them ſuch an extraordinary poliſh and luſtre, that they might well paſs for jewels of ineſtimable value, on one better ſkilled in thoſe matters than you were.

The ingots of gold were all baſe metal, which I got from the ſame artiſt. Nothing, in ſhort, was real, but the money, part of which I was very willing to ſacrifice to my experiment; though, as I have managed it, the largeſt ſums which thou in thy extravagance haſt expended, were returned into my coffers.

As I naturally ſuppoſed, that ſo long as the money laſted you would not have recourſe to the other treaſures, I was not afraid of having the fraud detected. The cave, which was an accidental circumſtance, but of which I had long known, was by my contrivance made the repoſitory of thy riches.

When

When thou wert ſettled in the full poſſeſſion of thy imaginary felicity, thou mayſt remember that Haſem was firſt recommended to thy ſervice; Mandana too was amongſt other ſlaves preſented to thy view. No wonder that her charms captivated thy heart. Her love to thee was as pure as it was fervent; but thy boundleſs wiſhes were not to be reſtrained; and forgetting all the rational principles that thou didſt at firſt lay down to regulate thy conduct, thou gaveſt thyſelf up to all manner of vile exceſſes, and didſt ſhew the depravity of the human heart, when unreſtrained by divine laws.

It was now time, I thought, to puniſh thee, and to ſhew thee the vanity of all earthly

earthly enjoyments. By opiates infuſed into thy wine that night on which thou didſt debaſe thyſelf by drunkenneſs, I threw thee into a ſound ſleep; and though it laſted not much longer than the uſual term of ordinary repoſe, it yet gave me an opportunity of making ſuch farther diſpoſitions, as I thought neceſſary for the carrying on of my deſign.

I laid hold of this juncture to withdraw Mandana from thy arms, promiſing however to reſtore her to thee, if I found thee ever worthy of her.

I believe it is needleſs to inform you, that the confinement I laid you under was for no other end than to cut off all

intercourſe

intercourſe between you and any others than thoſe of your own houſehold, every one of whom were of my placing about you, even to the ladies of your ſeraglio, who were no others than the prettieſt ſlaves I could find, amongſt thoſe who attended on my own women.

Every one entruſted with my ſecret, were tied down by the moſt ſolemn oaths to keep it inviolably; and this with a promiſe of reward, ſerved, as the event has ſhewn, to ſecure their fidelity.

There was not an action of thy life but I was made acquainted with; and whilſt thou didſt triumph in the joys of my ſucceſsful illuſion, I ſometimes

pitied

pitied thy weakneſs, and ſometimes laughed at thy extravagance.

That magnificent palace of which thou thoughteſt thyſelf maſter, was one which I had borrowed for the purpoſe from an emir who was in my ſecret, and who was himſelf often preſent in diſguiſe amongſt your ſlaves, a witneſs to your extravagancies. I will not encreaſe thy confuſion by reminding thee of the inordinate exceſſes thou wert guilty of in thy retirement. Thou canſt not have forgot the project of creating for thyſelf an earthly paradiſe. This was the ſecond criſis I laid hold on to puniſh thee; and by tearing thee from thy impious pleaſures, to remind thee that crimes

cannot

cannot be committed with impunity. A ſecond ſleep, procured as the former was, but of ſomewhat a longer duration, gave me full opportunity to make a total change in the face of thy affairs. Haſem (whom thou didſt ſuppoſe to be dead) remained ſtill ſecretly concealed in thy houſe, to be as it were the grand ſpring to move all the reſt of thy domeſtics. The hags whom thou hadſt impoſed upon thee for the decayed beauties of thy ſeraglio, were really a ſet of notable old dames, whom he had tutored for the purpoſe: Thy former miſtreſſes, who were inſignificant ſlaves, were diſmiſſed. She who perſonated the feigned Cadiga, acted her part to admiration, and with the artful contrivance of having

ing a roſe-bud painted on her breaſt, a mark which your young favourite really bore from nature, ſhe had cunning and addreſs enough to impoſe herſelf on you for the very Cadiga whom you formerly loved.

I believe, proceeded the ſultan, you are by this time convinced, that there was nothing ſupernatural in the ſeveral events of your life, and that you were in reality nothing more than the dupe of your own folly and avarice.

Thou mayſt remember after this period, that, fated with voluptuouſneſs, thy licentious heart began to grow hardened; and from rioting without controul in pleaſures, which, however criminal

minal in themſelves, carry at leaſt with them the excuſe of temptation, thou wantonly didſt ſtir up, and indulge the latent cruelty of thy nature. Thy ungoverned paſſions led thee to an act of blood! thou piercedſt with thy poniard the honeſt creature who remonſtrated with thee on thy evil works; but Heaven did not, however, permit thee to deprive her of life.

See, Nourjahad, of what the heart of man is capable, when he ſhuts his eyes againſt the precepts of our holy prophet. Thou ſtoodſt as it were alone in the creation, and ſelf-dependent for thy own happineſs or miſery, thou lookedſt not for rewards or puniſhments in that inviſible world, from which thou

thoughteſt

thoughteſt thyſelf by thy own voluntary act excluded.

This laſt barbarous deed, however, called aloud for chaſtiſement; and thou waſt for the third time deceived with a belief that thou hadſt ſlept a number of years, in which many mortifying revolutions had happened in thy family.

I was now reſolved to be myſelf an eye-witneſs of thy behaviour, and to try if there was any ſpark of virtue remaining in thy ſoul which could poſſibly be rekindled.

I diſguiſed myſelf in the habit of a ſlave; and having altered my face, and my voice, I preſented myſelf to thee under the name of Cozro. Thou know-

eſt

eſt what paſſed between us on thy firſt awaking from thy compelled ſlumbers, and that I heard and ſaw with what indifference thou receivedſt the news of my ſuppoſed death. But I will not reproach thee with ingratitude—let the memory of *that* be buried with the reſt of thy errors.

I had ſoon the ſatisfaction to find that thou waſt as it were a new man. The natural goodneſs of thy diſpoſition, thy reaſon, thy experience of the deceitfulneſs of wordly enjoyments, joined to the remorſe which thou couldſt not help feeling, for a ſeries of vice and folly, at length rouzed thee to a juſt ſenſe of what thou owedſt to the dignity of thy own nature, and to the duties incumbent on

thee

thee towards the reſt of thy fellow-creatures.

I now diſcovered, with joy, that thou hadſt intirely diveſted thyſelf of that inſatiable love of pleaſure, to which thou hadſt before addicted thyſelf, and that thou no longer didſt regard wealth, but as it enabled thee to do good. There was but one trial more remained. If, ſaid I, his repentance be ſincere, and he has that heroiſm of mind which is inſeparable from the truly virtuous, he will not ſhrink at death; but, on the contrary, will look upon it as the only means by which he can obtain thoſe refined enjoyments ſuited to the divine part of his nature, and which are as much ſu-

perior

perior in their eſſence, as they are in their duration to all the pleaſures of ſenſe.

I made the trial—The glorious victory, Oh Nourjahad, is thine! By thy contempt of riches, thou haſt proved how well thou deſervedſt them; and thy readineſs to die, ſhews how fit thou art to live.—

In the ſpace of fourteen moons (for it is no longer ſince I firſt impoſed on thy credulity the belief of thy miraculous ſtate) thou haſt had the experience of four times ſo many years. Such aſſuredly would be the viciſſitudes of thy life, hadſt thou in reality poſſeſſed what thou didſt in imagination. Let this dream of exiſtence then be a leſſon to thee for the future,

future, never to ſuppoſe that riches can enſure happineſs; that the gratification of our paſſions can ſatisfy the human heart; or that the immortal part of our nature, will ſuffer us to taſte unmixed felicity, in a world which was never meant for our final place of abode. Take thy amiable Mandana to thee for a wife, and receive the fixed confidence and love of Schemzeddin.

The hiſtory ſays that Nourjahad was from that minute raiſed to be the firſt man in power next to the ſultan; that his wiſdom and virtue proved an ornament and ſupport to the throne of Perſia during the courſe of a long and proſperous life; and that his name was famous throughout the Eaſtern world.

FINIS.